



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Road to Paris: Come, renew the face of the earth

The UN Climate Summit in Paris will be an unprecedented opportunity for nearly 200 nations to take bold action on the care for the earth and for all people suffering the adverse effects of climate change. The following article was written by Chloe Schwabe, MOGC Faith-Economy-Ecology program director.

What an exciting moment we are living in! From the summer launch of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*; the pope's visit to the U.S. during which he highlighted the need for climate action, peace, and care for migrants; the completion of the UN Sustainable Development Goals; and the upcoming UN Climate Summit in Paris, we feel a renewed sense of hope for the Church and our whole earth community.

The challenge before us is great. The shift from a "throwaway culture" to a "culture of care" will take personal sacrifice and structural changes. "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change," Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*. "We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual, and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal."

Maryknoll Missioners are committed to challenging themselves and challenging corporate power, international financial institutions and governments, to change their models of growth and production. We bring the voices of those most affected by climate change and poverty to decision-making tables as we advocate for adaptation funding in climate policy, environmental and social safeguards at the World Bank, or for corporate responsibility at shareholders meetings.

I was reminded about the need for an ecological conversion in my own heart and in our government policies while I was in Peru in October. The first week was spent at the World Bank meetings where, in one room, the Peruvian finance minister spoke positively about his country's economy (aside from a few problems in the extractives sector). And in another room indigenous people spoke about the environmental and human rights violations caused by a gold mining project supported by

World Bank financing in Cajamarca, Peru, site of the Yanacocha mine. One man spoke about getting shot by security forces while protesting the mine. He is now paralyzed and in a wheelchair. A woman, Máxima Acuña de Chaupe, described the harassment that she and her family suffer from the Yanacocha mine security, for refusing to give up their land.

During the second week, I visited the city of Puno where Maryknoll Sister Pat Ryan works with the Center for Human Rights and Environment. The center works to defend the rights of indigenous communities who often may not be aware that their land has been conceded for mining. Ever present in the region is a concern for water, which is already scarce and will become scarcer due to climate change, water grabbing by the mining companies, and contamination from the mining processes.

The center leads workshops on the human right to water and the legal rights of indigenous communities, made up of mostly farmers and llama/sheep herders. I met Aymara and Quechua community leaders – many of whom have little to no formal education and live in poverty – who face charges for violence that occurred in 2011 at a protest of the contamination from the Bear Creek mining project, despite the fact that it is unclear

who was present and who perpetrated the violence. This is just one example of the increased criminalization of protest, especially in the extractives sector.

The minerals processed and transported in Peru support our way of life in the U.S. They are in our building materials, jewelry, and electronics. The exploitation, extraction, production, and transportation all require energy, most of which is still based on fossil fuels.

In November, MOGC will launch a four-week series *Path to Paris*. Each week, a two-page guide will examine an adverse impact of climate change and what we can do. Share it with your parish and friends; and use it for personal reflection. Look for it in your email box and find it online at www.maryknollogc.org/tag/path-paris. We offer it in response to Pope Francis' call: "Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it." (*Laudato Si'19*) §



Road to Paris: Trade deals must protect climate

As countries prepare for the climate negotiations in Paris in December, some experts have called attention to the need for including safeguards to protect nations' actions to address climate change from legal challenges by trade partners. Without this legal protection, many of the initiatives to decrease climate emissions or to adapt to a changing environment could be overturned by lawsuits.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns continues to bring attention to the dangers posed by international trade and investment agreements, from threatening food safety and security, to making medicines less accessible, to fueling violence. One of our greatest concerns is the right awarded to private corporations to sue national governments over public policies that hamper a corporation's profit-making potential. These cases are heard in a special, extra-judicial court housed in the World Bank which advises investor-state dispute settlements (ISDS). These settlements have significantly impeded governments' ability to create and implement public health and safety laws, environmental protections, and a host of other important legislation. If the international trade tribunal decides that a government policy adversely affects a foreign corporation's profit making, the government can be penalized.

A group of UN special rapporteurs who are international human rights experts recently released a statement expressing concern that trade and investment agreements "are likely to have a number of retrogressive effects on the protection and promotion of human rights, by lowering the threshold of health protection, food safety, and labor standards, by catering to the business interests of pharmaceutical monopolies and extending intellectual property protection." They emphasized the threat of ISDS actions, noting that "States have been penalized for adopting regulations, for example to protect the environment, food security, access to generic and essential medicines, and reduction of smoking... or raising the minimum wage."

A new report by investment law expert Gus Van Harten offers the following language to be added to the Paris agreement to cover all existing and future trade and investment treaties:

"This Article applies to any measure adopted by a Party to this Agreement and relating to the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmo-

sphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system or relating to any of the principles or commitments contained in Articles 3 and 4 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1992.

"Such a measure shall not be subject to any existing or future treaty of a Party to the extent that it allows for investor-state dispute settlement unless the treaty states specifically and precisely, with express reference to this Article and this Agreement, that this Article is overridden. For greater certainty, in the absence of such a reference in a future treaty between two or more Parties, the future treaty is presumed to include in full and without qualification the first three paragraphs of this Article.

"Any dispute over the scope or application of this Article shall be referred to, and fall within, the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of [specific body and process pursuant to the multilateral climate change agreement]. For greater certainty, no investor-state dispute settlement tribunal, arbitrator, body, or process has jurisdiction over any dispute related to the scope or application of this Article.

"The Parties shall not agree to any future treaty that allows for investor-state dispute settlement unless the future treaty incorporates in full and without qualification the language of the first three paragraphs of this Article. The Parties shall make best efforts to renegotiate any existing treaty with a non-Party that allows for investor-state dispute settlement in order to ensure that the existing treaty incorporates in full and without qualification the language of the first three paragraphs of this Article."

"If negotiators in Paris, representing nearly 200 countries, do not address this issue, it will be impossible to change each trade and investment treaty individually to protect government initiatives addressing climate change. The UN Conference on Trade and Development reports there are more than 3,200 ISDS agreements functioning today with another created, on average, every other week."

This is an essential issue for all who want to see a robust commitment in Paris to reducing carbon emissions. No matter how strong the pledges, they can easily be weakened by ISDS lawsuits or even threats of lawsuits, as many small nations do not have the resources to defend themselves adequately in expensive court processes. §

Road to Paris: Climate justice, natural disasters

November 8 marks the second anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded. It devastated portions of Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, more than 6,000 people died and 4.1 million people were displaced. Many of the approximately 16 million Filipinos living in extreme poverty were affected. The following article, published by CIDSE as part of their video series "Stories for Climate Justice" tells the story of Dr. Efleda Bautista, a climate activist in the Philippines. Dr. Bautista describes what climate justice means to her.

"At the sight of what climate extremes can bring on people, communities and countries, both mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change are essential pillars in the face of the upcoming COP21 Climate Negotiations.

"The Philippines is one of the countries most affected by natural disasters, particularly typhoons or super-storms. With an average of 20 typhoons each year, the archipelago has experienced an increase in the strength of such natural events.

"Although scientists ask for a careful analysis, many have noted that climate change has to a certain extent affected the ferocity and frequency of these storms, as warmer waters in the Pacific Ocean are observed to have a direct link. Typhoon Haiyan (also called Typhoon Yolanda), in 2013, was one of the strongest and deadliest storms ever recorded in this region, leaving more than 12 million people affected.

"In a country where about 75 percent of the people depend on agriculture to live, the consequences were devastating, as crops were destroyed and water resources contaminated. Dr. Efleda Bautista is a representative of 'People Surge,' a broad alliance of Typhoon Haiyan victims. It brings people together to help typhoon survivors, while empowering them to take collective action and reduce the risks of similar calamities in the future. The alliance also calls on the national government to take adequate and prompt

measures to prevent, but also respond to the impacts of any natural disaster.

"In the context of this terrible event, Dr. Bautista highlights the contradictions that climate change exposes: how contradictory it is that many low income countries such as the Philippines feel the repercussions of climate change and pollution, despite being the ones that produce fewer emissions. It is a powerful example of the unequal relationship between high-income nations and low-income nations, and the urgent need to balance out this relationship if we are to achieve climate justice.

"She highlights that vulnerable people and communities must have an outstanding role in shaping the climate agreement in Paris, as she believes that solutions will not come easily from developed nations.

"As seen in this example from the Haiyan storm, extreme climate events can result in irreparable loss and damage, which often exceed the capability of people and communities to manage risk and repair the damages.

"In the upcoming UN Climate Negotiations in Paris, alongside the insistence on keeping temperatures under 1.5 degrees Celsius to prevent irreversible climate change, attention is also needed for both mitigation and adaptation measures, including the support of communities that will experience forced displacement due to the irreparable effects of climate change in their villages, cities, regions or countries."

To watch a video of Dr. Bautista and see more articles and videos in the "CIDSE Stories for Climate Justice" series, go to <http://www.cidse.org/articles/climate-justice/stories-for-climate-justice.html>. §



Climate change: Large-scale dams problematic

With increasing pressure to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, many countries are planning to increase their reliance on hydropower, meaning more dams. The conservation group International Rivers reports that at least 3,700 hydropower projects are under construction or in the planning stage. The following article examines the reasons why large-scale hydroelectric dams are a false solution to the climate crisis.

Some energy experts continue to favor the creation of hydropower by large-scale hydroelectric dams. They see large-scale dams as a clean source of energy since they do not burn fossil fuels to produce electricity. Indeed, many countries plan to increase use of hydropower in order to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Unfortunately, more and more studies show that large-scale hydropower is far from being a climate-friendly source of energy.

The construction of large-scale dams for hydroelectric energy has long been criticized for creating lakes that displace communities, blocking fish migration and trapping sediments that would normally fertilize downstream areas, and changing the chemical composition and temperature of rivers.

Few researchers have calculated the amounts of GHGs released by large-scale dams. Those who have studied the issue have found that large-scale dams actually release large amounts of GHGs. The Brazilian National Institute of Amazon Research estimated that the Tucurui dam in northern Brazil emitted an amount of GHGs “substantially greater than the fossil fuel emission of Brazil’s biggest city, São Paulo.”

The dirtiest dam ever studied is the Balbina dam, also in Brazil, that flooded a large area of forest while producing little energy. It was estimated to release 10 times more GHGs than an equivalent coal-fired power plant. Other dams studied by the institute were two to three times dirtier. Even the Wohlensee dam in Switzerland, a small dam in the temperate region where dams are said to create fewer GHGs, creates 119 grams of CO₂ per kilowatt-hour – cleaner than coal but 10 times dirtier than wind energy.

Large-scale dams create GHGs in a variety of ways:

- The organic material (trees, grasses, soil) of the flooded land decomposes, creating methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide. Methane is a greenhouse gas estimated to be 20-25 times more potent than

carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxide is almost 300 times worse. Dams built where vegetation is denser (the tropics) are the worst offenders.

- To build a dam often involves deforestation, which emits additional carbon into the atmosphere.
- Dams are made with large amounts of cement and steel, which require massive amounts of energy to be made, transported and installed.
- Dams divert water from downstream areas drying out important wetlands that provide a variety of important ecological services.
- Many dams have regular drawdowns that can change water levels by many feet. Two Washington State University studies saw 20- and 36-fold increases in methane emissions during drawdowns in two dams.
- A variety of dam-related activities also create GHGs, such as land clearing for resettlement sites, transmission lines, and access roads, and the expansion of irrigated agriculture (a major source of methane emissions).

This is in contrast with small-scale micro hydro power dams. Micro dams are seen as not quite so destructive nor contributing to GHG emissions as the large-scale dams. Indeed, they are often controlled by the local community as opposed to large-scale dams, which generate power for outside industries.

Most of the emissions are in the early years during and after construction, from dying vegetation, the cement and steel, and the loss of downstream wetlands. Philip Fearnside, a U.S. American professor at Brazil’s National Institute for Amazon Research (INPA) who studies the issue, warns “exactly as the world needs to reduce emissions quickly before the effects of global warming become even more serious, the spike [in emissions from dams] is happening right in that critical period.”

The cumulative effect of dams is significant. Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research estimated that the world’s largest dams (at least 15 meters tall) emit 104 million metric tons of methane each year, representing at least four percent of the warming impact of human activity and 23 percent of all methane emissions caused by humans.

If we are to be serious about addressing climate change, we cannot continue to treat hydro-energy as clean. Policymakers are currently ignoring this significant source of greenhouse gases. §

Malawi: Reflections on *Laudato Si'*

The following is an excerpt from an article written by Alex Muyebe, SJ, director of the Jesuit Centre for Ecology and Development, Lilongwe, Malawi, and Peter Henriot, SJ, who works with Loyola Jesuit Secondary School, Kasungu, Malawi. An unabridged version of this article, entitled "What does the environment encyclical mean for Malawi?" appears in the August 28 issue of the British Catholic magazine The Tablet.



"It was a very tall and very full tree, branches thick and thin – ideal for cutting down to cook many meals and to warm many huts. But over the years, no one has touched it, despite trees all around it having been cut down and the landscape left quite barren.

"Why has this tree been preserved? A local Malawian villager told us very directly and simply: 'The spirits protect the tree, to help us draw water locally.' A closer look at the roots of the tree reveals a small spring that provides good fresh water. But there's more to the tree's survival than this. The people of this village and other villages in the area have a very strong traditional belief in a spirit-filled world. And it is believed that this particular tree shelters spirits which provide water for all the communities around.

"The belief in a spirit-filled world that has been created for the delight and the good of human beings is of course a central theme of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's dramatic encyclical on the environment. The traditional African recognition of the sacredness of nature is echoed in its opening lines: 'In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.' (1)

"The message of *Laudato Si'* could not be clearer. Pope Francis not only firmly acknowledges the reality of climate change but insists on its close connection with human activity: 'A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system ... Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming

or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.' (23)

"The encyclical highlights in particular the need to respect and protect the dignity and lives of the poor. They are the most vulnerable to climate change. It emphasizes that 'a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.' (49)

"The people of Malawi do not need scientific investigations to show them that climate change in their beautiful country is very real. They have been undergoing its effects in dramatic ways in recent years: increased water scarcity, unpredictable weather patterns, recurring flooding and droughts, unpredictable start of rainfall with short rainy seasons, prolonged dry spells during rainy seasons, drying up of rivers and lakes with lowering fish supplies, heat waves, frequent bush fires, increased prevalence of water borne diseases, low and unstable hydro-electric production, declining flora and fauna, and declining natural species...

... "Early on in *Laudato Si'*, the Pope notes that 'change is impossible without motivation and a process of education....' (15). Loyola Jesuit Secondary School (LJSS) in Kasungu, Malawi, embodies this message not only in its instruction, but in its construction. Soil-based bricks have been used in its new buildings rather than the traditional kiln-burnt bricks. The school's desks and chairs and bunk beds have been made using trees from a lot where new trees are planted regularly to prevent deforestation. Solar water heaters have been installed. Small steps, but good steps.

"Malawians alone can't alter the climate change catastrophe the country faces. Very little of the global emissions of greenhouse gases come from a poor and non-industrialized country like Malawi. The people of the mighty fossil fueled economies of Europe, North America and China must be honest in looking at the situation, creative in designing effective responses and courageous in taking some hard and unpopular actions. Pope Francis repeatedly calls upon more effective international cooperation for the protection of our common home." ... §

Africa: Displacement on the rise

The death and displacement that occurs in the out-migration from Africa and the plight of internally displaced peoples across the continent were the subject of a recent hearing before the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. What emerged in the testimony of several governmental and NGO experts was a picture of tragic human suffering.

In July 2013, more than 300 Eritrean and Somali refugees drowned in the Mediterranean Sea off the island of Lampedusa. This tragedy awakened the world to the plight of African refugees and others seeking asylum in Europe. However, in the first six months of 2015, six times as many Africans asylum seekers have perished in the same sea.

In sub-Saharan Africa today the number of asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and refugees now exceeds 15 million. This is one-quarter of the 60 million people displaced worldwide – the largest number since World War II. More than half of all refugees are children. Those fleeing from conflicts in Somalia, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Burundi, Western Sahara and elsewhere now number 3.7 million. Sadly, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is resettling only 17-19,000 refugees from Africa in FY 2015.

These unprecedented numbers have stretched the response capacities of local governments and international aid agencies to the breaking point. The displaced people are vulnerable to economic hardships, human rights violations, without access to basic services, and often in physical danger from traffickers and xenophobic violence.

The causes of displacement are many but usually fall into two categories: threats to freedom and physical safety as a result of conflict or violence, and changes in climate or other environmental shocks. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center estimates that in 2014 at least 4.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were newly displaced within their own countries; 769,700 people were displaced due to natural disasters. Many of the remaining millions were displaced as a result of

societal and ethnic conflict. Armed non-state actors like Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army are examples of a new kind of conflict mechanism that is causing displacement especially in northeast Nigeria.

According to the UNHCR, often the average length of forced displacement can reach 17 years. Underlying many of the conflicts that are causing Africa's displacement is the unstable relationship between societies and

their states due to the lack of democracy and the flagrant abuse of human rights. Often weak states cannot hold back different ethnic and political differences, as in newly independent South Sudan.

The scope and manifold causes of displacement in sub-Saharan Africa present difficult challenges to host governments and humanitarian relief agencies. First, host governments bear

the responsibility of protecting the most vulnerable by maintaining places of asylum and supporting and protecting both internally displaced peoples and refugees. Second, governments like the U.S. must continue to provide assistance through financial aid and improvements in humanitarian aid delivery. Third, all parties involved must ensure that the responses to the displaced are suited for protracted situations, such as aid for education and assistance to those not living in refugee camps. Fourth, powerful countries like the U.S. must continue to persuade host countries to include refugees and other displaced persons in national development plans.

Throughout Africa, governments and humanitarian organizations are seeking new and creative ways to deal with the crisis of displacement. In Nigeria, some humanitarian agencies are using mobile protection monitors and offering cash transfers and vouchers instead of direct distribution of food and other household items. In Niger, pastoralist refugees from Mali are given an extensive area where they can move with their animals. This "zone" model has been successful in promoting self-sufficiency and independence for refugees. In Tanzania and Zambia, some refugees are offered durable pathways to local integration through permanent residency and, in some cases, naturalization. The Democratic Republic of the Congo approved loans for longer-term projects benefiting displaced persons and hosting communities in their countries. §



Refugees from Central Africa Republic. Credit: Nicolas Rost for OCHA

Zimbabwe: Water, sustainable energy for all

In August, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns staff member Sr. Claris Zwareva visited her homeland of Zimbabwe. Sr. Claris serves as Maryknoll's representative at the United Nations where the Maryknoll Sisters and the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Following are some observations from her trip.

In September, UN member states, including Zimbabwe, unanimously approved the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 objectives which include ending poverty and protecting the environment, to be achieved by 2030. During my visit to Zimbabwe I met people who are in dire need of relief from poverty and from the effects of climate change. They are struggling to survive economically in a country deeply affected by drought. Climate change has made life even more difficult in a country that was once the bread basket of Africa and is now dependent upon foreign imports as well as foreign currency for its commerce.

The government of Zimbabwe adopted the U.S. dollar as its currency in 2009. During my recent trip, I visited Longcheng Plaza, a shopping mall built by a Chinese corporation in 2013 on the outskirts of Harare. The shops are stocked with Chinese products that are affordable to most people. When I expressed surprise at seeing the large amount of inexpensive items, a local

resident replied, "Goods from China have made it possible for the poor to have shoes on their feet." However, the goods are of such inferior quality that they wear out quickly.

Cell phones are also easily accessible and abundant. Most Zimbabweans, both young and old, have cell phones and the demand for telephone landlines has dried up. Cell phone lines can cost as little as one dollar; the only things to do are buy a handset and then prepay for the service. I found this system helpful because I was able to purchase a cellphone and communicate with friends and relatives easily.

Although most people are happy with these developments, many young people are anxious about finding jobs and building a secure future. Despite Zimbabwe's well-developed education system, most university graduates cannot find jobs. Because of high unemployment people are now embarking upon self-employment. I was surprised to see the number of people selling clothes and other items on the sidewalk, competing with shops offering similar goods at a lower price.

High unemployment and insufficient rainfall have exposed people to a greater degree of food insecurity. During a visit to a rural area, I saw young people purchasing maize directly from an older woman because small farmers can no longer send their crops to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Farmers are no longer paid quickly by the GMB, therefore they have turned to the informal market.

The drought situation has affected agricultural production as well as the availability of water for domestic consumption and for livestock, forcing people to dig wells and to sink boreholes. With the long dry season it is uncertain how long these underground water reserves will last. Water from the Kariba Dam is used to generate electricity that serves cities but this year power cuts have been very frequent due to the dam's low water levels.

Sr. Claris' niece Tafadzwa collects water from a well in Zimbabwe.



Serious shortages of water and electricity have put the humor and the resilience of the people of Zimbabwe to the test. When I experienced my first electrical blackout, my nephew said, "Welcome to Zimbabwe!" The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Company (ZESA) is forced to ration electricity by "load shedding" – turning off electricity in one area for a few hours while turning it on in another. Often electricity will come on and go off throughout the night. Cell phones and other electrical gadgets may not recharge because of the sporadic electricity.

People are innovative in their efforts to access electricity and water. Most people have some form of solar chargers, in large and small sizes. The presence of

blue water tanks on roof tops, buckets filled with water standing ready in kitchens and bathrooms, candles, flashlights, and cell phones speak to the situation of uncertainty that the people of Zimbabwe are facing today.

It is evident that in order to have sufficient water and electricity, every person in Zimbabwe must do his or her part. Unhealthy environmental practices that increase atmospheric temperatures and result in drought must be halted. Educational programs that target both rural and urban populations are needed. The present situation is one of constantly living on the alert -- for when water will be cut, when electricity will go out and for when the food will run out! Food, water and energy are necessary if everyone is to live a life of dignity. §

Africa: The future of electricity

The following article was written by John Martinez, a graduate student at George Mason University and intern with the MOGC's Faith-Economy-Ecology project.

On October 8 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the Electrify Africa Act (EAA), legislation that aims to bring 20,000 additional megawatts of power to sub-Saharan Africa by 2020. Africa's population is growing at a tremendous rate, and is estimated to need as much power in 2040 as India and Latin America combined did in 2010. The EAA has been touted as a public-private partnership that would spur private sector investment in African infrastructure, not only bringing power but also opening the doors to all of the advances in industry, technology, and quality of life that depend upon consistent electrical access.

More than 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have little to no access to electricity. Those who do have access to existing electrical grid infrastructure must contend with spotty to nonexistent service. In Tanzania, electricity rationing has become commonplace as hydroelectric power plants have had to cut generation due to lack of water in reservoirs. Bringing consistency to existing grids and expanding access is of vital importance to African development. Electricity often brings better healthcare, better access to knowledge and information, more entrepreneurial opportunities, labor-saving technology, and the chance to participate in the 21st century economy and social space. However, the EAA is not a perfect piece of legislation, and its design raises some concerns.

First, the EAA lacks goals and accountability measures designed to protect the poorest Africans and those who could most benefit from affordable power. The act focuses on sheer increases in power generation and infrastructure development, reforms of power production and pricing, and regulatory reforms to support long-term market-based power generation. If relatively prosperous and wealthy urban centers disproportionately receive infrastructure development, unrest will likely follow; an equitable distribution of electricity is important to bring stability and prosperity to all of the people who for now do without.

Second, the EAA is an "all of the above" approach to energy generation. While green and renewable energy development will play a role in EAA implementation, the door is left open to the expansion of coal and gas powered plants. The bulk of the bill focuses on business concerns and stimulating private development of these markets. This is perhaps one of the greatest problems with the EAA – it is a missed opportunity of significance, both practically and symbolically.

Africa will see significant population growth and development in the 21st century. This presents an opportunity to build with an eye toward a more sustainable future. The fact that fossil fuel energy is considered a key component in the EAA is an example of how short-term immediacy takes precedence over long-term sustainability.

Unfortunately, the EAA does not fully embrace the responsibility of wealthier nations to assist poorer nations in their efforts to provide the sustainable and renewable energy sources that our world desperately needs. §

Kenya: Peace conference held for teachers

The following article was written by Dr. Gerald and Marita Grudzen of Global Ministries University, based in California, and was originally published in Maryknoll News.

The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Society Center in Nairobi provided hospitality, room, board and conference facility for most of 35 participants in a five-day interfaith conference held ... from August 10-14, 2015.

The purpose of the conference was to orient primary and secondary school teachers from diverse areas of Kenya to the potential for interfaith-based religious education, as a vehicle for peacebuilding in Kenya.

The Kenya-based Maryknoll Sisters [Peace Team] – Giang Nguyen, Sia Temu and Teresa Hougnon – brought a group of teachers, a local imam, and a madrasa teacher from the Tana River Delta area to the conference. This was particularly significant because this area of Kenya has experienced intense intercultural conflict recently, with many fatalities. The sisters have used a conversational method of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, marked by outreach, inquiry, humility and commitment, which has been extremely fruitful in bringing people [in the region] together to resolve their conflicts ... The humble, skillful conversational approach of the Maryknoll Sisters Peace Team shines as a model for peacebuilding.

Judy Walter, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner in Mombasa, Kenya and Marita Grudzen led a workshop on spirituality and service within the interfaith context. The participants identified over 20 expressions of spirituality and shared stories of community service and personal transformation in small groups as part of the workshop.

Judy Walter has served as a volunteer nurse in Bangladesh, in India, and now manages St. Patrick's Clinic in Mombasa. She studied interfaith spirituality with Dom Bede Griffith at his ashram in India and will be a founding member of the Lake House of Prayer in Tanzania. The house is sponsored by the local archbishop, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers and the Maryknoll Lay Missioners. Judy brings her training in Clinical Pastoral Education, Spiritual Direction, Hospice Chaplaincy and years of contemplative practice.

Fr. Lance Nadeau, MM, gave two presentations during the week. He first spoke on the Challenges and Opportunities for Interfaith and Intercultural Dia-



Srs. Giang Nguyen, Sia Temu and Teresa Hougnon serve on the Maryknoll Sisters peace team.

logue in Kenya. Later in the week he spoke on the historical and sociological context of Youth Radicalization in Kenya. Fr. Nadeau works with youth as the Catholic chaplain at Kenyatta University in Nairobi and has studied the problems facing Muslim youth in Kenya. He is also the Regional Superior for the Maryknoll Fathers ad Brothers in East Africa and has had diverse interfaith experiences in Muslim communities of the Middle East, such as in Cairo, Egypt.

The entire course brought together representatives of the four major faith traditions in Kenya: Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religions and Hinduism, [and] included a Jewish interfaith perspective. As the week drew to a close, the teacher participants developed recommendations about how to incorporate interreligious and intercultural dialogue into their teaching and the communities where they reside. The majority of the teachers in the conference came from the Lamu County and Tana River Delta regions of Kenya, which have experienced either intercultural or interreligious conflict.

Global Ministries University (GMU) developed, implemented and evaluated this third interfaith educational program in Kenya; identified and funded the presenters, their transportation costs; [and] provided funding for transportation of the teacher trainees to Nairobi. GMU hired trained technical experts who provided live streaming of [the] event at the following web link: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/global-ministries-presents>. Photos of the conference are available at <http://www.facebook.com/pathstopeacekenya>. §

Guatemala: Latest election no laughing matter

On October 25, former comedian and television celebrity Jimmy Morales won Guatemala's presidential election after a rising anti-corruption citizens' movement helped bring down President Otto Pérez Molina. The following article was written by Sustainable Pathways to Peace and Security intern Nicholas Alexandrou.

After running under the campaign slogan of "neither corrupt nor a thief," professional comedian and newly-elected Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales has much to live up to.

Despite having never held public office – aside from his fictitious portrayal in "Un Presidente de a Sombrero" – his outsider persona attracted many voters who are clearly tired of the institutional corruption by career politicians. However, the underlying challenges and the political views of Jimmy Morales signal major troubles ahead.

Guatemala not only faces poverty and inequality – according to the World Bank, 50 percent of the population lives in poverty, with higher rates among indigenous communities – but a recent report by the Central American Institute for Fiscal Study found that 29 percent of the country's total budget is allocated in areas exposed to corruption and that as much as six percent of the annual budget goes unaccounted for.

Currently, the single-chamber Guatemalan National Congress holds no clear majority and will require a coalition to pass legislation. While former candidate Manuel Baldizón failed in his bid for the presidency, his party, the Democratic Renovation Party (LIDER), now represents the largest faction in the Congress with 44 seats. Sandra Torre's National Unity of Hope Party (UNE) represents the second largest faction with 36 seats. Morales will find forming a coalition challenging,



especially as he attempts to foster working relationships with former antagonists.

The new president's views on security and indigenous issues raise major concerns. Coming from a right-wing perspective, his nationalistic and hardline rhetoric comes across as "more of the same" rather than a "breath of fresh air." His support of the "zero-tolerance" approach to gang activity, commonly known as *mano dura* (heavy hand), may signal an ongoing desire to continue hardline security policies. Morales also denies that the genocide occurred against the indigenous Ixil people during the rule of former president Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt. (See box below.)

Morales is a member of the Convergence National Front (FCN) party, which is run and financed by right-wing former military officers, including those in power during the three-decade civil war, when more than 200,000 people were killed by the military. Close associates of Morales include Col. Cesar Augusto Cabrera Mejía and Édgar Justino Ovalle Maldonado (current leader of the FCN party), both of whom directed intelligence in the Alta Verapaz department capital of Cobán between 1982 and 1983, where more than 316 skeletons have been exhumed from a series of mass graves.

Morales' political inexperience and close association with right-wing members of society raise concerns that he may look for guidance from military officers and nationalists within the FCN. It will come as no surprise if the new government finds a way to formulate a coalition with the right-wing LIDER party, which caucused with the now deposed president Oscar Pérez Molina's Patriotic Party. In many ways, it could easily be a situation whereby it is meet the new boss, same as the old one. §

Appeals court rejects amnesty for Ríos Montt

From Guatemala Human Rights Commission USA: October 9 -- A Guatemalan appeals court has rejected former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt's request for amnesty in a trial regarding Montt's responsibility for war crimes and genocide. Though Montt was recently diagnosed with dementia, he will face a special, closed-door trial in early 2016. Due to his condition, Montt will be represented by his lawyers. §

Honduras: OAS plan to combat corruption

The following article was written by Sustainable Pathways to Peace and Security intern Nicholas Alexandrou.

On September 3, after a rising anti-corruption citizens' movement and protests of what became known as the "La Linea" ("the Line"), Guatemalan President Oscar Perez Molina resigned.

In neighboring Honduras, however, President Juan Orlando Hernandez has yet to meet the same fate despite a series of scandals involving the embezzlement of US\$200 million from the Social Security Institute and illicit financing of his presidential campaign (See July-August 2015 *NewsNotes*, "Central America: Corruption fuels protests").

Despite the growing political volatility produced by these corruption scandals, flanked by an outraged middle-class movement known as the "movimiento indignado" and a somewhat half-hearted unified political opposition, the Honduran president has managed to remain in office by negotiating with the Organization of Americans States (OAS).

The process of bringing opposition figures from the "movimiento indignado" and other civil society groups to the negotiating table with OAS representatives has proved to be difficult. Talks between the Honduran president and recently-elected Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, resulted in a plan to facilitate national dialogue. The secretary general appointed Chilean diplomat and OAS employee John Biehl as the chief negotiator for President Hernandez.

Within a week, Biehl raised eyebrows by claiming that President Hernandez was the so-called "victim" of a government lacking credibility. Biehl said he has "no reason to doubt" the honesty of the Honduran president as he "has spoken very frankly."

After meeting with approximately 100 civil society

organizations composed of academics, workers, businesses, "indignados," human rights, and farmworkers, the Honduran government and the OAS composed a plan that many criticized as lacking essential anti-corruption elements. The final plan agreed upon by the Honduran government and the OAS on September 28 was far less significant than the work of Guatemala's independent UN-sponsored court, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG).

Known as the "Mission Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras" (MACCIH), the Honduran plan contains a set of interlocking components that define the general objective of engaging with Honduran institutions. Many of these components will play an advisory role through monitoring, evaluating, and information sharing. The Wilson Center has a well-detailed critical overview of the MACCIH's mechanism.

Many of the civil society organizations consulted by the Honduran government and the OAS during the national dialogue criticize the plan's limited advisory role, judging it to be nothing more than window dressing. While international

judges and lawyers are expected to supervise and assist Honduran institutions, the perceived deep-seated culture of corruption in these institutions make many citizens skeptical of the fruitfulness of these efforts. The MACCIH should by no means be compared to the CICIG. While the CICIG maintained an independent judicial court, something many Hondurans want, the MACCIH has no such feature.

For President Juan Orlando Hernandez, the MACCIH represents an opportunity to offer a weak response to pressure to address institutional corruption in Honduras. For the OAS secretary general, the mission is a gamble in demonstrating the relevance of the OAS as a promoter of democratic institutions. Unfortunately, the general lack of investigative or legally binding measures rules out the possibility of genuine enforcement measures against impunity and corruption. §



Mexico: Costs of immigration enforcement

The following article was written by Sustainable Pathways to Peace and Security intern Nicholas Alexandrou.

Tens of thousands of men, women, and children continue to seek escape from violence and poverty in Central America by migrating to the U.S. But since the start of Mexico's "Plan Frontera Sur" (Southern Border Plan) in July 2014, they have a strong chance of being detained and promptly deported by the Mexican government long before they reach the U.S. border.

The U.S. and Mexican governments have not addressed the root causes of the flow of migrants from Central America to the U.S.; rather, they have worked together to stop the flow by force.

The "Plan Frontera Sur" implemented under Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, with tacit support from the Obama administration, aims to enhance security along the Mexican-Guatemalan border by creating a wall of containment to apprehend migrants before they reach the U.S. border. This has entailed the militarization of surveillance and enforcement, with 5,000 federal police and military troops sent to reinforce the poorly paid and equipped border police.

While the program remains a Mexican initiative, the U.S. has provided both technical and financial support. Pillar 3 under the Merida Initiative calls for the creation of a "21st century border" – an objective that has allowed the U.S. to channel funds to "Plan Frontera Sur" amounting to US\$79 million for the fiscal year 2015, according to a report to Congress by the Congressional Research Service. Also, the Department of Defense has trained Mexican troops patrolling the border and enhanced their surveillance capabilities.

In June, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights released a statement severely criticizing the program over the treatment of those detained by security forces. Conditions for those deported also remain poor despite existing laws and mechanisms on the proper treatment of migrants during deportation.

A recent report by the International Verification Mission of the Project Counseling Service examined the conditions of Honduran migrants detained and deported by the Mexican government. The report identified a lack of proper social services as well as abuse and negligence by Mexican authorities. From detention to deportation, facilities lacked proper hygiene conditions, poor sanitation, and improper access to medicines. Those inter-

viewed by the mission members reported instances of Mexican authorities physically and sexually abusing migrants, soliciting bribes, and failing to inform migrants of their right to apply for asylum.

Mexico's National Migration Institute (Instituto Nacional de Migración or INM) estimated that between January and November 2014, Mexico repatriated 86,949 Central Americans, of whom 16,600 were minors – a larger number than the total number of minors Mexico repatriated in the entirety of 2013 (8,446 out of 49,201 Central Americans).

A recent analysis by the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) identified a resurgence in the number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The U.S. Border Patrol data for the month of August 2015 included the largest monthly number of apprehended minors (4,632) since the unprecedented wave of children that made U.S. headlines in mid-2014. In comparison, U.S. Border Patrol reported to have apprehended 3,138 children in August 2013.

The WOLA staff offer two probable causes for this increase: the adoption of new routes and methods by smugglers and the worsening violence in El Salvador (See the September-October 2015 *NewsNotes*, "El Salvador: Instability foments violence"). Tighter security along the Mexican-Guatemalan border has caused smugglers to shift migration routes to more isolated paths far removed from state enforcement. These new routes leave migrants ever more vulnerable to criminal gangs and the elements.

More and more families and unaccompanied minors attempting to migrate to the U.S. are refugees fleeing violence – a genuine reason for asylum. A recent opinion piece by Sonia Nazario in the *New York Times* highlights the struggle of those fleeing violence and persecution in Central America. Many do so under the threat of either being forcibly recruited or killed by gangs.

While the violence and poverty continues unabated in Central America, reactionary immigration policy like "Plan Frontera Sur" has increased the instances of human rights abuses, especially for those seeking asylum. The short-term result of fewer migrants reaching the U.S. border dissipated quickly, as new migration routes formed – albeit more dangerous, isolated, and expensive for those fleeing. Unless the U.S., Mexico, and Central American governments address the underlining root causes of migration, the problems of human rights abuse and rising migration numbers will persist. §

Israel/Palestine: Violence escalates

The following article details the alarming surge in deadly violence in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and calls for nonviolence.

Recent attacks on Israeli citizens by Palestinian teenagers with knives have been widely condemned, while the shooting deaths of dozens of unarmed Palestinian protesters by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have received less media attention. Since early October more than 50 Palestinians and at least 10 Israelis have been killed.

Daily demonstrations in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank often turn violent – Palestinians throw stones and Molotov cocktails and the IDF responds with live fire. Israeli human rights organizations have denounced “shoot to kill” tactics sometimes endorsed by Israeli government officials.

The madness of violence has spiraled out of control with an Israeli mob killing a migrant from Eritrea who they mistook for a terrorist, and a masked settler attacking Arik Ascherman, the founder of Rabbis for Human Rights, on October 26, with a knife. Churches for Middle East Peace points out that the rhetoric of Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, especially his claim that a Palestinian religious leader suggested the death camps to Hitler (a claim immediately denounced by Holocaust scholars), is fanning the flames of fear and hatred among Palestinian youth who see no prospects for the future.

In a video message in mid-October, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon urged Palestinians and Israelis to deescalate the tensions. “To the youth of Palestine I say: I understand your frustration. I know your hopes for peace have been dashed countless times. You are angry at the continued occupation and expansion of settlements. Many of you are disappointed in your leaders and in us, the international community, because of our inability to end this conflict. [You should turn your frustrations into] a strong, but peaceful, voice for change,” Ban said.

The following statement was released on October 19 by Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace movement, of which Maryknoll is a member:

“Pax Christi International is deeply distressed at the scenes of escalating violence in Palestine and Israel.

“Pax Christi International has worked for many years with Palestinian and Israeli human rights and peace organizations to support their work for a just peace in the Middle East based on human rights. Around the world our members and partners are praying for all

those whose lives are being destroyed by violence. We are convinced that nonviolent, legal and political solutions are the only way to stop the violence.

“We believe the painstaking work to build confidence and peace between people is totally compromised by this current rise in violence. Palestinian youngsters who attack Israeli civilians play an important role in this, and so do the Israeli security forces that exacerbate the violence and do not protect Palestinian civilians.

“In these days we have seen the Israeli Defence Forces and police officers using excessive force in a ‘shoot to kill’ policy against Palestinian civilians, resulting in injury and death and provoking counter-violence from the Palestinian community. If crimes are committed they must be dealt with as crimes and not as acts of war according to the rules of law enforcement. Perpetrators should be arrested.

“More must be done to defuse a culture of fear and hatred. The Israeli Government and the Israeli Defence Forces are inciting and provoking extremists on both sides of the conflict in attempts to escalate violence and justify further military action. Such actions must be challenged.

“Through our years of partnership in the region we have witnessed time and again the deep frustration and oppression of Palestinians who have lived with 49 years of illegal occupation. This is an unresolved injustice for more than four million people and we plead with the international community, including the EU and the United Nations to renew its resolve to address the root causes of the conflict. The cost of failing to do so is too great to contemplate and undermines the security of both Israelis and Palestinians. International protection for Palestinian civilians has emerged as a key need in this present phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The occupation should be ended in order for peace to be achieved.

“We also urge the EU and the United Nations to work more closely with peace and human rights groups on the ground, including the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Arab Educational Institute, Wi’am, B’Tselem, Rabbis for Human Rights, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Stop the Wall, The Israeli Committee against House Demolition and Kairos Palestine. They and other Palestinians and Israelis seeking a nonviolent resolution of 49 years of injustice need support, encouragement and accompaniment and are essential partners in any peace process. §

Myanmar: Sectarianism threatens democracy

The leader of the Catholic Church in Myanmar, Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, speaks out against recent discriminatory voting rules that could lead to violence as the national Election Day on November 8 nears.

Myanmar is preparing for historic elections in which Nobel-prize-winning opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is a leading candidate. Yet the government's support for racial and ethnic persecution by extremist Buddhist groups and its failure to negotiate a promised cease-fire with all armed ethnic groups in a decades-old civil war threatens prospects for peace and democracy in the former Burma.

President Thein Sein is touting a national cease-fire agreement on October 15 as a historic step toward peace. Yet the failure to include key combatants – including one of the largest groups – has many observers claiming that authorities have not delivered on their promise to end fighting ahead of the highly anticipated November elections. In fact, only eight of 15 groups who participated in the national peace process signed the agreement.

Large parts of Christian-majority Kachin state, in Myanmar's north, effectively remain in a state of civil war. At the same time, human rights groups denounce a mass disenfranchisement of persecuted Rohingya Muslims, which is seen by many observers as a test of the country's quasi-civilian government's democratic reforms.

Earlier this year, the government effectively disenfranchised about 700,000 people, mostly Rohingya, when it declared holders of "white cards" ineligible to vote. The cards had been issued as temporary identification documents, and white-card holders had been permitted to vote in the 2010 election. In October, thousands of Rohingya Muslims who cast ballots in previous elections were left off the voting lists.

Before the campaign began, the country's election commission disqualified most of the candidates running for a predominantly Rohingya party. A prominent Rohingya parliamentarian who previously won a seat with the military-backed ruling party was also disqualified.

The government and the Buddhist Rakhine community do not recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's official ethnic groups, and instead require them to identify as "Bengali" since they are considered illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh – even though many Rohingya have served in the government and lived for generations in Myanmar.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the government's actions, remarking on September 29: "I am deeply disappointed by this effective disenfranchisement of the Rohingya and other minority communities. Barring incumbent Rohingya parliamentarians from standing for re-election is particularly egregious."

In August, Yanghee Lee, the UN special rapporteur for human rights, expressed "grave concern" about the disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of potential voters.

"More must and can be done to address the legal status of the Rohingya and the institutionalized discrimination faced by this community," she said in a statement.

According to a Union of Catholic Asia News (UCAN) article on September 10, Cardinal Bo condemned a package of legislation known as "the race and religion laws" or "Black Laws." Rights groups and faith leaders fear the laws will be used to persecute religious minorities in the Buddhist-majority country.

"Parliament was coerced by a fringe group of religious elite to enact four black laws, virtually fragmenting the dream of a united Myanmar," the cardinal said in a strongly worded statement on September 11: "(It) is a dangerous portend for the fledgling democracy."

President Sein signed into law the last of the four divisive bills on Aug. 31. The restrictive legislation had been championed by hardline Buddhist monks from a group known as Ma Ba Tha, or the Committee for the Protection of Race and Religion.

The laws include a population control bill imposing mandatory "birth spacing" between a woman's pregnancies; a monogamy law setting punishments for people with more than one spouse; an interfaith marriage law requiring Buddhist women to register their marriages in advance if they want to wed a non-Buddhist man; and a law regulating religious conversions.

Rights groups and faith leaders fear the laws are an attempt to target Myanmar's Muslim minority, particularly the often persecuted Muslim Rohingya.

Cardinal Bo declared the Buddhist teachings of universal compassion and mercy for all were being threatened by "peddlers of hatred."

"We need peace. We need reconciliation. We need a shared and confident identity as citizens of a nation of hope," Cardinal Bo said. "But these four laws seemed to have rung a death knell to that hope." §

Trade: TPP negotiations end

On October 5, the U.S. and 11 other nations finalized negotiations on the biggest trade agreement in history: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The following article examines concerns about the potential impact of this trade and investment deal on access to medicines and environmental standards.

Negotiated since before President Obama took office, and in earnest since 2009, the TPP is set to expand investments and laws related to the environment, labor, access to medicines, capital controls, internet privacy, banking, and other sectors. It will encompass about 40 percent of the global economy.

Negotiated in secret, it will not be released to the public or Congress until late November, once Canadian Prime Minister-designate Justin Trudeau has established his cabinet, and side agreements and translation are finalized. While little is known about the content of the full agreement, Wikileaks released the text of the chapters on the access to medicines and on the environment. Already tobacco and name-brand pharmaceutical industries have expressed anger with the agreement.

The chapter on medicines is better than previous drafts that contained proposals on topics such as patents on medical procedures and on medicines administered during operations. (See the March-April 2015 *NewsNotes*, “Trade: TPP threatens access to medicines”). But it falls short of the 2007 deal, known as the “May 10 agreement,” brokered by the George W. Bush administration and the U.S. House of Representatives which placed limits on pharmaceutical companies’ monopoly. The May 10 agreement facilitated the continued generic competition, with some restrictions, through which many people depend for access to affordable medicine. From early on in the TPP negotiations it was suspected that the U.S. trade representative was abandoning the May 10 template; this chapter confirms it.

The Obama administration backed down from its insistence on a 12-year wait time on data exclusivity before manufacturers could start producing generic formulas of biologics. Biologics consist of live cell cultures and are used to treat cancer, hepatitis, AIDS, and other diseases. The U.S. agreed to a five-year wait time after pressure from Chile, Peru and, in particular, Australia. A longer wait time could have derailed the negotiations since five years is the standard in Australia. The TPP is the first trade agreement to restrict biologics. Also, according to Public Citizen, “Unlike the May 10 agree-

ment standard, the TPP would require developing countries to quickly transition to the same rules that apply to developed countries, which provide extreme monopoly rights for the pharmaceutical industry and limit access to affordable medicines.”

Another weak area is the chapter on intellectual property. It includes patent extensions, also known as “evergreening.” Companies will be able to change the formulary (e.g. from a capsule to a tablet) and extend the patent life for another 20-year period. For a full analysis of the differences between the May 10 agreement and the leaked chapter, see the Access to Medicines Program memo by Public Citizen.

According to *Inside U.S. Trade*, the chapter on environmental standards contains five environmental treaties, only one of which, the Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), is enforceable. CITES, which generally requires countries to ban trade in specific endangered species, will be subject to a dispute settlement mechanism. Other likely treaties to be included are the Montreal Protocol (related to protecting the ozone layer) and MARPOL (related to curbing ship pollution). Other environmental protections may also include efforts to curb shark finning, fishing subsidies, and the illegal trade of plants and wildlife but with varying degrees of monitoring and enforcement. Specifics could still change between now and when the text is officially released.

The TPP also contains labor action plans (LAPs) for Vietnam, Malaysia, and Brunei due to the climate of fear among workers who want to unionize in Vietnam and Brunei, and for Malaysia’s poor record on labor trafficking. Reports say that the U.S. failed in its attempt to include a LAP for Mexico; officials are still discussing how to address the labor and human rights violations there.

However, labor action plans do not guarantee that workers’ rights will be respected. A new report from a recent delegation to Colombia by the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists states that during the four years since the enactment of the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement, Colombian workers have endured more than 1,933 threats and acts of violence, including 105 assassinations of union activists and 1,337 death threats.

With concerns about human rights in many countries in this agreement, the Colombia FTA should be seen as a cautionary tale. §

Food security: Golden rice study retracted

The following is an excerpt from a press release issued on August 8 by MASIPAG, a network of farmers' groups, scientist and non-government organizations in the Philippines.

The article “B-Carotene in Golden Rice is as good as B-Carotene in oil in providing Vitamin A to children” was published in the September 2012 issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (AJCN). The Massachusetts Superior Court denied the [appeal of the] senior author, Dr Guangwen Tang, ... to stop the retraction. According to the AJCN, on July 17, 2015, the court decided to clear the way for the American Society of Nutrition (ASN), the copyright owner of the journal, to retract ... the said article on July 29, 2015.

The court based its decision on moral and ethical grounds, saying that there was insufficient information given to the Chinese school-age children, and their parents/guardians, who underwent golden rice feed testing. Dr Tang, a researcher based in Tufts University, headed a team of scientists to conduct nutritional study on golden rice on children in Hunan province in China.

“This is a welcome development to those who oppose the golden rice. The farmers feel vindicated that they uprooted the golden rice field trial in August 2013. They are strongly against the field trial of the said crop as it might affect their crops, health and environment. With this retraction no nutritional or safety studies exist that supports the benefits of golden rice,” said Dr Chito Medina, national coordinator of MASIPAG.

... August 8 [marked] the second year when about 400 farmers ... trooped [to] the golden rice field trials inside the regional office of the Department of Agriculture in Pili, Camarines Sur and uprooted the said GM crop. Also last year, more than 20 organizations and regional groups from all over Asia convened to form the STOP Golden Rice! Alliance. They also protested in front of the Department of Agriculture to stop the impending commercialization of golden rice.

Golden rice, a transgenic rice containing beta carotene, is being heralded as the solution to Vitamin A deficiency (VAD). At present, it has completed the multi-location field trials in the Philippines and is now in the process of collating the data for regulatory approval. After the regulatory approval, feed testing on the people will commence. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) of the Department of Agriculture are the

proponents of the said project. But of course, the force behind this is the owner of golden rice, Syngenta, and other biotech corporations. They push to commercialize golden rice by 2016 or earlier. In fact, a group of lobbyists ... had a campaign ... in the Philippines, Bangladesh and India last March. Apart from the Philippines, golden rice is also being field tested in contained areas in Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Moral and ethical grounds

The AJCN stated several reasons for retracting the article. The authors were unable to provide sufficient evidence that the study has been reviewed by local ethics committee in China. Also they were unable to prove that all parents and children involved in the study were provided with the full consent form for the study.

Tufts University also made a separate investigation about the incident, and concluded that Dr Tang had ethical shortcomings. She was banned from conducting human research for two years. She will also be supervised in future research.

Aside from these issues, opponents also pointed out that the research was done using meals that are high in fat that would favor positive results of the experiment. The meals were supplemented with 10g butter, 100g of pork meat and egg. Vitamin A needs fat for it to be effectively absorbed by the body. Opponents say that this is not consistent with reality wherein poor families are unable to buy balanced diet.

“We believe that the golden rice feed testing in children is rigged to support its claims in eradicating Vitamin A deficiency. As the court has stated, the researchers has cut corners to hasten the commercialization of the product. They have also done the study in secret; no one was informed that a nutritional study was being conducted to children. We suspect that this same research will also be done to Filipino children, as they are fast tracking the commercialization of Golden Rice in the country. We need to be vigilant,” added Dr Medina.

In the Philippines, continuous opposition by farmers and the proponents’ failure to increase the yield of golden rice have set back the commercialization of the said GM crop for one to two years. More and more communities, municipalities and cities are also putting in place ordinances against the planting of GM crops in their areas, [and] farmers have been ... putting up “GMO Free Farms” signages in their fields to inform farmers to stay away from GM crops. §

Resources

- 1) **Path to Paris:** Inspired Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* and empowered by the experience of Maryknoll missioners around the world, MOGC offers a four-week series on the challenges to be addressed at the UN Climate Summit and what can do individually and collectively to respond. Each two-page guide offers prayer, study, and actions. Find them at www.maryknollogc.org/tag/path-paris
- 2) **Month of Climate Action:** November 2015 is a historic month to take action against climate change. On November 30, world leaders will inaugurate the UN Climate Summit and sign a treaty to tackle the climate crisis. All are invited to join the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) in prayer and action throughout the month and culminating with the Global Climate March in major cities around the world on November 29. Learn more at the GCCM website: <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/month-climate-action/>
- 3) **Paris, for the People and the Planet:** This new report from CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies from Europe and North America, was published one month before the beginning of the UN Climate Summit and sets out CIDSE's vision for the Paris agreement, which should put the moral dimension of climate change at its core. The report is available in English, French, and Spanish at <http://www.cidse.org/newsroom/press-release-paris-agreement-should-put-people-first.html>
- 4) **Why We Need Paradigm Shift: Mitigating Climate Change and Feeding the World:** This op-ed, published in *Truth Out*, is written by Hilal Elver, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and a research professor and co-director of the Project on Global Climate Change, Human Security, and Democracy housed at the Orfalea Center for Global & International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Find it at <http://www.truth-out.org/speakout/item/33041-why-we-need-paradigm-shift-mitigating-climate-change-and-feeding-the-world?tmpl=component&print=1>
- 5) **Milpa! From Seed to Salsa, Ancient Ingredients for a Sustainable Future:** This beautiful book by former Maryknoll Lay Missioners Phil and Kathy Dahl-Bredine features the brilliant photography of Judith Haden, recipes from dozens of campesina chefs organized by Susana Trilling, and narratives from indigenous villages. It speaks of the manner in which this ancient/modern civilization plants and works, celebrates and governs itself, its rich cuisine and its vision of its place in the grand scheme of the planet Earth. Learn more about the book at <http://sustainablemilpa.blogspot.com/>
- 6) **Rostos da Migração:** This beautiful photo journal of migrants in Brazil, written in both Spanish and English and designed in the likeness of "Humans of New York," is the work of Maryknoll Lay Missioner Greg Fischer. Follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/rostosdm?ref=ts>

A tribute to Judy Coode

With this issue of *NewsNotes* we say farewell to our amazing editor for the past 20 years, Judy Coode, who last month left Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns for new adventures in her life journey. We will miss Judy's deft touch as an editor, her passionate commitment to social justice, and her delightful sense of humor in the midst of the absurdities and cruel injustices that are a part of the work. For over 20 years she has been a courageous witness for peace and nonviolent resistance in the Catholic tradition, embodying the compassion and commitment of Maryknoll as we accompany marginalized communities worldwide in the struggle for justice. We look forward to whatever reprises of laughter and joyful presence at MOGC that she'll grace us with as we remain colleagues and friends in the movement for justice and peace.

And a warm welcome to Susan Gunn, following in Judy's footsteps as our new Communications Manager: may you enjoy the next 20 years with the same grace and joy as Judy!