



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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What the Gulf oil crisis can teach us

Social, economic, ecological and political crises collide as U.S. citizens continue to watch the oil catastrophe destroy communities, livelihoods, wildlife and our trust in the politicians we elected to lead and guide us through such calamities.

Socially, the oil spill shines a spotlight on the serious inequality that exists within U.S. society. As oil ruptures the lives of people who make their livelihoods from fishing and showing visitors the beauty of the flora and fauna of coastal wetlands, BP executives calculate just how much the company (which made \$17 billion last year alone) can pay out in damages. In the past 15 years, while some salaries quadrupled in size, social mobility has declined for many in the U.S. who never climb out of poverty.

Economically, the oil spill is just another reminder of loss for those in the nation's middle class whose pensions, retirement funds and homes vanished in the wake of Wall Street gambling. While many in the U.S. lost their hard earned savings, entire communities overseas were deprived of food and affordable transportation as food and fuel commodity speculation wreaked havoc on prices.

Ecologically, the oil spill points to collective U.S. inaction in developing energy alternatives to fossil fuel and in bringing consumption to a sustainable level. If no action is taken, the current rate of over-consumption, waste production and investment in dirty technologies will permanently and negatively impact Earth's capacity to support life. But rather than slowing these activities, the U.S. has played an active role in accelerating the pace. The frenetic tempo, stoked by patriotic choruses of "oil independence," has led to the tragedy we witness in the Gulf of Mexico and the massive displacement of people around the world as coal-fired plants, hydroelectric dams and more drilling for oil and other precious minerals continue to be developed.

Ironically, the political implications of the oil spill are rooted in President Obama's attempt to cajole some of the most headstrong members of Congress into passing a climate and energy bill. The administration rushed through investigations to open up offshore drilling, taking the industry at its word on safety standards which had been watered down and overlooked by previous administrations. Even as the Minerals Management service and the Department of the Interior work to find a path to-

ward lifting the moratorium brought on by the spill, the Senate bill - laboriously worked to cater to the whims of the few - will likely not garner the votes needed to pass (see page 16).

According to David J. Hayes, a deputy interior secretary interviewed by the *New York Times* on the Gulf Coast oil spill, "Congress, environmental groups, industry, the government — all stakeholders involved — were lulled into a sense of what has turned out to be false security."

Despite this and the collective faulty memory which allows past mistakes to be repeated, people keep searching for an authentic way to follow Jesus and God's desert teachings.

If we look to our faith, we will find a way forward amidst the social, economic, ecological and political crisis of our day. We were called to live with sufficiency — to take just what's needed; to keep gifts circulating and to stop our busy, frenzied lives every seven days to rest and re-create.

In ancient times our ancestors were led out of slavery and into the desert where they were taught how to live with sufficiency. In the desert they were given manna so that they would not go hungry. They were instructed, each one, to take no more than what was needed, to keep the gifts circulating and to pause for a day to honor Sabbath.

If each one took just what he or she needed, we might not have the rich amassing mountains of wealth while others suffered. Jesus had much to say about this as well. In the story of Lazarus and the rich man Jesus makes it clear that the rich man passed up many opportunities to share his abundance to ensure that Lazarus's needs were met.

If we kept God's gifts that we experience through creation circulating, we would treasure these gifts, keeping them pristine for the next community to use and the next generation to enjoy. There would be no inner city children growing up never knowing that a tomato grows from the ground; animals would not be forced to stand in their own excrement awaiting slaughter and packaging; and we would employ the precautionary principle to find the safest and most renewable way to produce energy to power our way of life. As he sat at table with his friends many times and especially just before his death, Jesus modeled how to keep the gift of food circulating at a table where all are included and all are fed.

Zimbabwe: Still struggling

Zimbabwe's inclusive government continues to be the subject of intense scrutiny, particularly by those Zimbabweans who are still waiting to see badly needed improvements in their quality of life and capacity to meet daily needs. (The national housing backlog is estimated at more than one million, with the Harare city council saying the capital alone had more than 500,000 families on the waiting list for decent housing.) The international community is also watching closely. The Zimbabwe Transition to Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (S. 3297), which opens the debate about U.S. policy towards Zimbabwe, was introduced into the Senate recently. According to Africa Action, the bill will be an important catalyst to the process of reviewing and re-aligning U.S. policy with democratic and reconstruction aspirations. We shall see.

In May, several faith-based organizations, including the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), along with civil society partners, met to deliberate on the progress made by the inclusive government. In a joint statement released at the meeting's conclusion, they wrote, "It is ... our prayer and demand that the ... government must create a conducive environment to ensure that all citizens of Zimbabwe enjoy life in its abundance and fullness."

While acknowledging implementation of parts of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that led to partial stabilization of the economy, they expressed concern that the GPA has not been fully applied. Signed in September 2008, the GPA includes provisions for a land audit, a commitment to economic stabilization and growth, and a call for the removal of sanctions, as well as the promotion of national healing, Constitutional reform, and a fostering of democratic spaces through the introduction of various commissions on elections, media and human rights.

At their meeting, the ZCC and the others identified these urgent concerns: deepening and widening poverty; food inaccessibility for a majority of Zimbabweans due to lack of income; high unemployment (over 90 percent) and the failure to create new jobs; the discouragement of investment and (by some political authorities) of humanitarian assistance; continued problems within the education sector, with increasing illiteracy and a 60+ percent drop out rate

due to high costs; slow recovery within the health sector; poor service delivery eroding the people's confidence in public institutions; the re-emergence of political violence and intimidation in certain areas; the curtailment of freedom of worship, e.g. the burning down of churches and disruption of services; the seven-month delay in the Constitutional process and apparent lack of commitment and transparency in the selection of the outreach teams, the rapporteurs and the development of the talking points; failure of the Organ for National Healing and Integration to function effectively in a tension ridden country; violence against human rights defenders; and the marginalization of Zimbabwean citizens and the monopolization of the processes for national healing and Constitution by the three political parties

Noting that all human beings are created equal before God, they called upon the three principals to apply political will to ensure the full implementation of the GPA; respect the God-given rights, security and dignity of persons; dismantle all structures that perpetuate political violence; reform the security sector as a critical component of creating a peaceful transition; create the relevant mechanisms to enable the independent commissions to function effectively; and ensure that the current chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is Zimbabwe-based and readily available.

They also called for free and fair elections by the end of 2011 with church and civic society monitoring; international and regional supervision; a new and clean voters' roll; a new ZEC Secretariat with an adequate budget allocation; a conducive environment for a free media, voter education and transparency; and the creation of a Constitutional and Electoral court – and urged the Southern African Development Community, which will meet in August 2010 in Namibia, to prioritize "these concerns from the people of Zimbabwe."

Faith in action:

According to Africa Action, U.S. policy should focus on supporting equitable economic recovery, democratic constitutional reform, national healing and a full transition to a democratic order. Read its analysis of the Zimbabwe Transition to Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (S. 3297) at the Africa Action website, www.africaaction.org.

Tanzania: Mining company bullies NGO

Foundation HELP, a small nonprofit organization spotlighted in an MOGC Together with Africa update last year, has disseminated information about the effects of a toxic sludge spill from the Barrick Gold Corporation's North Mara Gold Mines (NMGM). On June 8, Foundation HELP received a seven-day notice from lawyers for the North Mara mine, demanding 1) evidence of the effect of the spill on local residents and 2) an apology to the mine for spreading the information about the spill. The attorneys threatened legal action against Foundation HELP if these demands were not met. In the face of the pressure, Foundation HELP's director, Chacha Wambura, wrote that, despite its modest size and meager resources, the group "will stand with poor and marginalized community members in North Mara no matter what it will take."

In a letter requesting support for Foundation HELP, Evans Rubara, policy and advocacy advisor for the Council of Churches in Zambia, wrote that the group has been active and instrumental as a research launching pad for a number of studies carried out on the impacts of the extractive industry in Tanzania's Lake region, with a main focus on the communities living in the mining areas in the North Mara.

Rubara writes, "Barrick's strategy to single out and intimidate organizations and individuals who bring to [the] surface evidences of social, economic, environmental injustices resulting in gross human rights violations have been known to many of us who have worked against malpractices in the mining sector.

"With this letter and ultimatum issued to Foundation HELP's executive director, the voices of the poor and marginalised communities in the North Mara will not be heard and this organisation will vanish as it does not have the resource muscle to stand the ground against Barrick Gold Corporation."

A recent study entitled "The investigation of trace metal concentrations in soil, sediments and waters in the vicinity of gold mines in North West Tanzania," published by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) Department of Plant and

Environmental Sciences and the University of Dar es Salaam Department of Botany, reports that the Geita Gold Mine (GGM) and the NMGM have developed large quarries in the middle of fertile agricultural lands. According to the report, "Possible hazardous impact on the natural recourse impelled a [June 2009] pilot study on the trace element contents in soils, sediments and natural waters. The need to follow up these studies is obvious as several sites have accumulated potentially hazardous contents of trace elements. The previous accidental spill that took place from the NMGM in May 2009 has seriously contaminated sediments and waters nearby. However, other sites more remote from this site are affected, as particularly the contents of arsenic (As) was found to be unacceptably high in both sediments and waters.

"Although the contamination situation was less severe in the area near GGM, findings from this place show that As contents in sediments is worrying. Detailed biogeochemical studies at both places are highly recommended. Along with such studies, there is a pressing need for an extensive study of the population, their diet and agricultural management practices, to map particularly the As sources, its transport in the food chain and finally its content in human tissue samples of different groups of the populations

"Generally, there is no reason to dispute the impact of large scale mining on the local environments, but the study shows a great variety in type of elements and intensity spilled. We have not been speculating nor discussed the direct health effect connected to these findings as that is outside our expertise. The only link to human health has been the comparison of element concentrations in water with [World Health Organization] drinking water recommendations."

Faith in action:

Send expressions of solidarity and support for the work of Foundation HELP to Executive Director Chacha Wambura who has been singled out by Barrick. His email address is info@foundationhelp.org; more information on the organization can be found at www.foundationhelp.org.



Africa: Priorities of the Obama administration

The remarks of Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs, prepared for the Diplomacy Briefing Series Conference on June 15, identified U.S. priorities in sub-Saharan Africa. The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has been engaged in significant discussion with the administration about several of these programs, particularly the food security initiative (Feed the Future), PEPFAR and the Global Health Initiative, implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan and climate change. Carson described U.S. priorities in the following way:

Strengthen democratic institutions and protect the democratic gains made in recent years in many African countries: Since the 1990s, according to Carson, dozens of African countries have moved from dictatorship to democracy, in one of the most impressive political transformations in history. Democratic elections, including those in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and Ghana, have “served to remind the world of the importance that Africans attach to democracy, as well as the values that underpin it.” Yet, “concerns about democracy and good governance remain in a number of countries” as a result of flawed elections, harassment of opposition groups, and attempts by presidents to extend their term limits, as well as the recurrence of some military coups and interventions.

“[Africa’s] political and economic success depends a great deal on the effectiveness, sustainability, and reliability of its democratic institutions,” he said. “We encourage governments across the continent to get elections right. To level the playing field, clean up the voter rolls, open up the media, count the votes fairly, and give democracy a chance.”

Work alongside African countries to promote and advance sustained economic development and growth: “Despite impressive economic growth in recent years, Africa remains one of the poorest regions of the world, and the continent has yet to be fully integrated into the global economy. Africa’s share of world trade is less than two percent and Africa’s tremendous wealth in natural resources has not translated into greater prosperity for its people. [It] also faces a massive digital divide with the rest of the world, which further inhibits the ability of Afri-

can companies to compete on the global stage.”

In response, the administration has launched a new \$3.5 billion food security initiative, Feed the Future (see page 14); it will promote opportunities created by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and explore “ways to promote African private sector growth and investment, especially for small and medium-sized businesses.”

Work side-by-side with African governments and civil society on public health and health-care related issues, ensuring that quality treatment, prevention, and care are easily accessible to communities throughout the continent: In addition to combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, and polio, especially through the continuation of PEPFAR, the Obama administration has pledged to invest \$63 billion in Africa’s public health systems, in training more medical professionals, and in helping African countries fight diseases that “simply should not kill people in this day and age.”

Work with African states and the international community to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts and disputes: The brutal conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia have come to an end, but turmoil and political unrest persist in Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as in Madagascar. “These conflicts create both internal and regional instability and undermine Africa’s chances for economic growth,” said Carson. “The Obama administration has taken a keen interest in working with African leaders and African regional organizations to help resolve these conflicts.” In Sudan, focus is on “ensuring the full implementation of the 2005 [CPA], which will permit the people of South Sudan to vote in January 2011 for independence or unity with the North.” In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the U.S. is working to address the extreme violence against women and stem the trade of conflict minerals “which continues to fuel conflict and instability.” In Somalia, the U.S. is calling for “well-meaning actors in the region to support the Djibouti Peace process, and to reject those extremists and their supporters who seek to exploit the suffering of the Somali people.”

Deepen cooperation with African states to ad-

dress both old and new transnational challenges, including climate change, narco-trafficking, trafficking-in-persons and arms, and the illegal exploitation of Africa's minerals and maritime resources: "Meeting the climate and clean energy challenge is a top priority for the United States and the Obama administration. Climate change affects the entire globe; its potential impact on water supplies and food security can be disastrous. As President Obama said in Ghana, '[W]hile Africa gives off less greenhouse gasses than any other part of the world,

it will be the most threatened by climate change.' Often those who have contributed the least to the problem are the ones who are affected the most by it, and the United States is committed to working with Africans to find viable solutions to adapt to the severe consequences of climate change... With our international partners, the United States is working to build a sustainable, clean energy global economy which can drive investment and job creation around the world, including bringing energy services to the African continent."

Sudan: At the crossroads

In late June, a conference on Sudan was held in Germany, arranged by the German-Sudanese non-profit organization Sudan Forum eV, along with the Sudan Ecumenical Forum/Sudan Focal Point-Europe. The 150 participants discussed many of the complex and difficult issues at play as Sudan approaches the critical January 2011 referendum mandated by the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and they issued the following communiqué:

... [R]epresenting Sudanese civil society and political parties, faith based organizations ..., international non-governmental organisations and institutes, governments and government agencies, after lengthy and frank discussions of the ... socio-political situation in the country, and particularly preparations for the forthcoming Referenda and Popular Consultations as well as the situation in Darfur, state a "Kairos" moment for Sudan. ...

Being aware of the fact that there are only 197 days left for the Referenda in Abyei and Southern Sudan, and the Popular Consultations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, alarmed by the humanitarian situation in bigger parts of the country, conscious of the lessons to be learned from the recent elections, and concerned about the lack of a genuine democratic transformation process as well as about the ongoing conflict and once again increasing human suffering in Darfur, we commit ourselves and call upon all stakeholders, governments, political parties and civil society organizations in- and outside the country, to put the citizens, their rights and physical security in the centre of attention, and to step up efforts to safeguard a peaceful transition and future for all people in Sudan.

We call upon the Government of Sudan (GOS)

to stop aerial bombardment and all forms of violence targeting civilians in Darfur, and to fully facilitate the work of humanitarian agencies. We ask the conflicting parties to respect human rights and international humanitarian laws, to stop abducting people and endangering humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. We call upon the GOS and the armed groups in Darfur to pursue a genuine peace dialogue and to obtain the support of the civil society including the IDPs through participation in the peace process. We urge the mediators to ... keep absolute neutrality, to regain and maintain trust, and to refrain from working out separate agreements with the warring parties. For the sake of the peace process in Darfur, but also for the sake of any peace talks wherever and whenever conducted, we ask the AU and the UN to strictly stick to the principle of guaranteeing free passage and movement of any negotiating party.

We note with concern, that the process of Popular Consultations might not meet the aspirations of the people in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, that the people in the two states are ill informed about the process itself, and that the bill does not provide a mechanism of arbitration in case the people feel their views are not taken serious.

We are alarmed by the fact that the preparations for the Referenda in Abyei and Southern Sudan are far behind schedule and time is running out. We urge the partners to the CPA ... to immediately set up the Referenda Commissions and all other bodies necessary for conducting the Referenda. We welcome the joint Referendum Task Force and the process as just started under the auspices of the AU and supported by Norway, to negotiate the post referendum settlements, and call upon the parties to

provide an open and transparent process, keeping the citizens informed, in order to especially allow those eligible to vote in the Referenda to make an informed choice.

Voters' education and proper international monitoring ... [are] key to a peaceful conduction, and lessons need to be learned from the recent election process. We call upon all stakeholders to safeguard a timely, free and transparent self-determination process and to respect the outcome of such a process. Oil is a key element for the post referendum arrangements. Whatever the outcome, issues of the severely affected environment with serious consequences for human beings as well as livestock, the compensation for lost land and property, and the transparency of

contracts urgently need to be addressed.

... We urge the governments in Sudan, and international and national (N)GOs, to regard the needs of the people with long term and flexible programs, including follow up activities, in a coordinated effort, based on proper analysis of needs, human resources, the social context and with the full involvement of local communities.

But all efforts will be in vain, if the people of Sudan will not be given the chance of genuine peace-building, reconciliation as well as trauma healing, and to define their own destiny. We call for the full support to enabling and conducting such processes, which will result in proper state building in peace and justice.

Honduras: One year anniversary of coup

The following article is based on a June 28 entry at Hemispheric Brief, a website focused on Latin American politics and policy.

On the one year anniversary of the coup d'état ... an editorial in *El Tiempo* [states that] Honduras is experiencing a situation of profound "abnormality." The social-political trauma caused by the coup is very different than past coups, the paper writes, "due to the complex characteristics of its authors -- a coalition of individuals holding state power, businessmen, the military, religious fundamentalists, and politicians, never before seen in Honduras."

The paper continues: "Moreover, the true motivations of the *golpistas* remain hidden behind a dense rhetoric about defending democracy from a supposed socialist totalitarian threat, when the real purpose was -- and continues to be -- preventing any possibility for the Honduran people to have their own voice and participation, since, from the elite perspective, the people do not have the capacity to reason."

Added to this all, says [the editorialists], is the power of narcotraffickers -- a force, in addition to the *golpistas*, who desire a weak Honduran state.

The Associated Press, meanwhile, focuses on whether or not the return of [deposed President Manuel] Zelaya might help facilitate a solution to the on-going crisis. Some analysts, like Francisco Rojas, secretary general of [the Latin American School of Social Sciences, FLACSO], say the ousted former

leader's return would open the door for Honduras's re-entry to the Organization of American States (as well as a new deal with the international financial institutions to help the country's cash-strapped economy). Others disagree, however, continuing to argue Zelaya must be taken to court should he return to his native country. ...

[In June,] 27 members of the U.S. Congress sent [a letter] to Secretary of State Clinton [to express their "continuing concern regarding the grievous violations of human rights and the democratic order which commenced with the coup and continue to this day." They called for Michael Posner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, to visit Honduras and "make a prompt assessment of what is occurring there with regards to human and political rights." The letter also says that "without an early and accurate report, we would be reluctant to see U.S. support for Honduras continue without significant restrictions."]

[T]he Washington Office on Latin America has released a statement citing the persistence of human rights violations, illegal dismissals, impunity, and attacks on journalists. And here's how Amnesty International's Guadalupe Marengo puts it: "President Lobo has publicly committed to human rights but has failed to take action to protect them, which is unacceptable. He needs to show he is serious about ending the climate of repression and insecurity in Honduras - otherwise the future stability of the country will remain in jeopardy."

Guatemala: Is impunity beginning to end?

After decades of gathering dust in the archives of the Guatemalan judicial system, 10 human rights cases finally are beginning to move forward. Yet entrenched military and political powers are working to stall the lawsuits in order to avoid prosecution. Guatemalans and those interested in human rights are following the cases closely; if thoroughly prosecuted, they will be a significant breakthrough toward ending impunity in the country.

One of the principal lawsuits is that of Efraín Bámaca Velásquez (also known as Everardo), a former rebel leader who was arrested by the Guatemalan military in March 1992. Officials told his wife, human rights lawyer Jennifer Harbury, that he had been killed that day, but months later, escaped prisoners reported seeing Bámaca being tortured by the military in clandestine prisons. Harbury began a campaign to find the truth that continues to this day. In 1993, she brought the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and carried out hunger strikes in Guatemala and the U.S. to pressure officials to release more information about her husband. Her efforts paid off in 1994 when the U.S. released documents showing that, days after his arrest, the CIA knew that Bámaca had not been killed but was in the control of the Guatemalan military. If they had released that information he and others might be alive today.

Bámaca's case went to a full trial at the IACHR in Costa Rica in 1998. A landmark unanimous decision was issued in 2000 holding the government responsible for Everardo's disappearance and torture. The court ordered the government to begin proper criminal investigations and proceedings, an order that was ignored for many years.

In 2007 and 2009, the IACHR repeated its criticism of the Guatemalan government for its lack of action on this and a number of other suits and called for them to move forward. Then-Attorney General Dr. José Amílcar Velásquez Zárata took the rulings seriously and, with financial assistance from the Dutch embassy, began to process the cases.

As the legal actions developed, the first roadblock encountered was that a military court had met secretly on many of the cases and had declared the defendants innocent. So they now claimed that they were being tried twice for the same crime. Surpris-

ingly, the Guatemalan Supreme Court quickly declared those military trials to be invalid and that the IACHR decision must be followed. In the Bámaca case, his wife has been named *querellante adhesiva* (consulting plaintiff), which gives her rights almost equal to a prosecutor.

Of course, these remarkable advances are not occurring without negative reaction. A prosecuting attorney associated with the first case to result in an arrest was killed with a point blank shot to the head. (In early July, a court officer on the same case was murdered.) The military has also tried to discredit Harbury and declare her marriage to Bámaca illegitimate. Those involved in prosecuting these cases know the long history of assassinations of human rights defenders, but they continue on under a cloud of intimidation.

In May, the president appointed a new attorney general, chosen from a list of candidates provided by a panel of jurists. Many assumed that Zarate would be selected, but neither he nor any of his assistants were included in the list of six nominees. The president named Conrado Reyes, a man with known connections to right wing organizations, who immediately fired all of the human rights oriented members of the prosecutorial staff. In response to Reyes' appointment and the firings, Carlos Castresana, the head of CICIG (the UN-backed anti-impunity commission that is helping in most of these cases) quit, calling for Reyes' removal in his resignation speech. Four days later, Reyes was removed and an interim attorney general has been appointed who has rehired some of the fired staff.

Clearly those who face prosecution are willing to do whatever is necessary to stall the proceedings. But they may also indicate their waning influence as the cases continue to move forward.

Faith in action:

This important time in Guatemalan history requires international support. Now is a time when letters would be effective in helping ensure that these cases are completed. Go to the website of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA for details about sending a letter to Guatemalan authorities and to sign their petition, www.ghrc-usa.org. If you don't have access to the internet, contact the MOGC for talking points for a letter.

Philippines: Hope, challenges of Aquino's election

The following reflection was written by Columban missionary Fr. Shay Cullen, whose writings are often published in the Manila Times, in publications in Ireland, the UK, Hong Kong, and online. This article, reprinted here with Fr. Cullen's permission, was published on June 2 at <http://www.preda.org>.

[On June 30, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III was installed as the 15th president of the Philippines. He had been] elected on a wave of hope and nostalgia that began with an emotional tsunami during the eight-hour funeral procession of his mother, Corazon "Cory" Aquino last August.

She was much loved, not only as the first democratically-elected woman president of the Philippines [and] in Asia, but also because of her integrity. She is revered and respected by Filipinos because she helped topple the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos and restore democracy in the Philippines. She ignited respect for human rights and non-violence and high hopes for an end to corruption, assassinations and forced disappearances. However, they were not widely realized in her presidency.

It is these same desires and longings that the Filipino people want to be actualized through her son. They see her integrity embodied in him. These are certainly challenging times for the [new] president and his administration. Against them, there is an arrayed culture of political violence and powerful elite determined to get what they want and to bring them down to succeed.

Perhaps the first executive order could be "to ban all assassination teams from the armed forces, police, the militias and the death squads of local governors and mayors with special presidential enforcement units to implement it." The culture of impunity [allows] officials [to put] themselves above the law and [use] torture, summary execution, and illegal liquidations as punishment[s] that fit all.

The death squads have terrorized hundreds of thousands with a reign of fear and terror and tortured and murdered hundreds of innocent people, mostly political activists, community organizers and human rights workers. According to ... Counsels for the Defense of Liberties (CODAL), a lawyers' organization, ... since 2001, 26 lawyers and 10 judges were killed due to their professions; 755 civilians had been killed extrajudicially, while 359

survived attacks, but 184 persons were still missing. Archbishop Deogracias Yniguez stated that on the [Catholic Bishops of the Philippines'] count, the number of victims of extrajudicial killings is 778, while survivors of "political assassinations" reached 370; 203 were "massacre" victims, 186 missing or involuntarily disappeared, 502 tortured, or illegally arrested.

It is a long history of impunity and murder perpetuated by political and military figures who have never been brought to justice. The justice system has failed to address these crimes in the past. [In] December 2003, the Human Rights Committee of the UN concluded its investigation into the human rights situation in the Philippines and came to the following conclusion: "The Committee is concerned about the lack of appropriate measures to investigate crimes allegedly committed by State security forces and agents, in particular those committed against human rights defenders, journalists and leaders of indigenous peoples, and the lack of measures taken to prosecute and punish the perpetrators."

Such recommendations have been ignored; the killings have continued unabated. Perhaps the most cruel and atrocious of all violations of human rights is the killing of street children. Many cities have a death squad. Some mayors give warnings over the radio for suspects to leave the city, within days they are found murdered, some as young as 14 years old. ... There are good laws but with the implementers of the law are the main suspects in violating it, what hope is there? There have been no credible convictions so the Philippine judicial system has failed.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the court of last resort where perpetrators can to be held accountable for systematically murdering street children and youth or instigating mass killings. The court can bring a suspect from any country that ratified the treaty to court on charges of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. ... States Parties must cooperate with the Court, including surrendering suspects when requested to do so by the Court. One hundred and eleven nations have ratified the Rome Statute that set up the ICC and they met recently to vote on extending it to cover more crimes. The Philippines has signed but not ratified it. This must be done without delay.

Toward an Arms Trade Treaty

In mid-June, government representatives gathered in New York for the Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) to review progress on the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. After a week of deliberations at the United Nations, the nations agreed to strengthen their co-operation to reduce gun trafficking and armed violence.

According to the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA, www.iansa.org), the meeting focused on several key topics including combating illicit small arms trade across borders and improving international cooperation and assistance. The BMS also laid the foundation for a successful ongoing process on small arms and light weapons and reviewed country reports, which are important for building transparency and confidence.

In October 2003, Amnesty International, IANSA and Oxfam International began the Control Arms campaign. In December 2006, they successfully mobilized an overwhelming majority of governments (153) to vote in favor of an historic UN General Assembly (GA) resolution 61/89 which called for work to begin towards a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) covering international transfers of conventional arms.

In 2007 and 2008 a process to assess the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of an ATT included input from states, nongovernmental organizations and, finally, a UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), which was mandated to examine the same ATT-related topics. The GGE was composed of experts from countries including Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The United States, which was the only state to oppose the 2006 UN vote in favor of working towards a treaty, also had an expert at the discussions.

In October 2008, 147 states voted to move forward on the ATT and to establish an Open-Ended Working Group, open to all UN member states to further consider the elements in the GGE report where consensus could be developed for their inclusion in an eventual, legally binding treaty.

In July 2009, for the first time, all governments agreed that international action is needed to address

the problem of the unregulated arms trade. Almost no state seriously questioned the merit of developing international regulations, and a majority of the countries urged that negotiations begin on an ATT. A clear message was given that a small number of states must no longer block the desire of the overwhelming majority for a legally binding ATT. While the U.S. has previously opposed discussions on a future ATT, it was now willing to fully engage in the debate.

In October 2009, after years of discussions and debates, the vast majority of governments – 153 in total – agreed a timetable to establish a “strong and robust” ATT with the “highest common standards” to control international transfers of conventional arms. Most of the world’s biggest arms traders – including the U.S., United Kingdom, France and Germany – agreed to back the UN process. Nineteen states abstained but were all expected to take part in the process. Zimbabwe was the only state to vote against.

The Control Arms campaign – now a coalition of hundreds of non-governmental organizations in over 100 countries – called on all states to negotiate a truly effective treaty. They warned that governments must keep up the momentum to ensure the final treaty has firm international standards for the global arms trade. The ATT will be negotiated in a series of UN meetings concluding at a UN conference in 2012; the next preparatory meetings will take place in New York July 12-23.

The Control Arms Campaign advocates for a global treaty based on “five golden rules” to help stop those international transfers of conventional arms that are likely to be used for serious human rights violations, and fuel conflict and poverty: “States shall not authorize international transfers of conventional arms or ammunition where they will: (i) be used or are likely to be used for gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law; (ii) have an impact that would clearly undermine sustainable development or involve corrupt practices; (iii) provoke or exacerbate armed conflict in violation of their obligations under the UN Charter and existing treaties; (iv) contribute to an existing pattern of violent crime; and (v) risk being diverted for one of the above outcomes or for acts of terrorism.”

Food security: Agriculture's future in debate

An important debate currently is taking place in the U.S. Congress and media regarding the future of food and agriculture, provoked by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), which is a consortium of biotechnology firms including Monsanto and Syngenta, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. AGRA argues that the only way to feed the world's growing population is to dramatically increase the use of genetically engineered (GE) crops and intensify a global food system where a few countries produce food for the rest of the world. The other side of the debate says that the best long term solution is to use agroecological farming, a science that studies natural processes and shapes agricultural techniques to be most in harmony with those processes. The MOGC is an active part of this side of the debate for a variety of reasons.

GE crops not as productive

First, GE crops are not nearly as productive as widely believed and agroecology is much more fruitful than thought. "Failure to Yield," the Union of Concerned Scientists' 2009 study of 20 years of genetically modified crop production in the U.S., concluded that "GE soybeans have not increased yields, and GE corn has increased yield only marginally on a crop-wide basis. Overall, corn and soybean yields have risen substantially over the last 15 years, but largely not as result of the GE traits. Most of the gains are due to traditional breeding or improvement of other agricultural practices."

Even in India, often portrayed as the best example of the benefits of GE crops by their supporters, the results have not been nearly as positive as touted. While initially providing impressive increases in production, those gains shrunk significantly in later years. Many poorer Indian farmers found the use of GE crops to be especially disastrous. Although they are engineered to produce more (theoretically), the seeds are also designed to not reproduce, so farmers must buy new seeds every year in addition to the required chemical insecticides. This has resulted in heavy debt for millions of farmers. The desperation of being unable to pay off these obligations has driven thousands of farmers to commit suicide; ironically, many did so by drinking the GE chemicals. (See May-June 2009 *NewsNotes* for a related article.)

Organic crops more fruitful than thought

Meanwhile, organic agroecological crops are more productive than commonly perceived. A 2007 study by the University of Michigan, comparing data from almost 100 studies of conventional and sustainable agriculture, concluded that a worldwide switch to organics could actually increase global food production by as much as 50 percent — enough to feed a population of nine billion people without any additional land. A 2003 peer-reviewed analysis of 208 projects (with almost nine million farmers) in over 50 "developing" countries found a 93 percent increase in food production when farmers switched to sustainable methods.

"Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa," a 2008 study by the UN Conference on Trade and Development and Environment Programme, analyzed 15 organic agriculture programs in East Africa. It found that "organic agriculture can be more conducive to food security in Africa than most conventional production systems, and ... it is more likely to be sustainable in the long term." The study found that the conversion from traditional low chemical input farming to full organic practices did not result in loss of productivity — in fact, as the organic farms became more established, they out-produced traditional farms and matched the productivity of conventional farms that rely on fertilizers and other chemical inputs.

Much evidence shows that organic agriculture helps farmers adapt to and resist climate change, which is already affecting farmers around the world. After Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America in the late 1990s, researchers found that farmers using sustainable methods lost less money and less soil in the disaster, and were able to recover faster than their conventionally farming neighbors. Both the USDA and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have noted the ability of organic methods to store carbon in the soil, which decreases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Finally, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), perhaps the largest study of agricultural practices in history, involving over 400 scientists and development experts from more than 80 countries, and whose results have been endorsed by 58 countries, determined that conventional in-

dustrial agriculture has significantly degraded the world's soils and other natural resources, and threatens water, energy, and climate security. The report warns that expensive, short-term fixes — including GE crops — are not likely to reduce long-term hunger and poverty, and could even worsen environmental and social problems in many communities.

Other concerns with GE crops

Even if GE crops were as productive as supporters portray, they are not a long-term solution. Both the manufacture of GE seeds and the chemicals that they require, as well as the machines to plant and spray, are heavily dependent on fossil fuels like natural gas, which is estimated to reach global peak production within the next two decades. After reaching this peak, the price of natural gas will rise quickly and significantly, making GE crops even more expensive and unsustainable. In addition, manufactured phosphorous and nitrogen, perhaps the center of modern agriculture, are also predicted to peak within the next 20 years.

Perhaps a larger worry about GE crops is the concern of having a small number of corporations control the food production for much of the world. Not only are more and more countries and farmers adopting GE crops, but these crops also spread naturally through wind and rain, contaminating unplanted fields and affecting non-GE crops. Clearly having such severe concentration in the production of the food we eat is not a good idea.

Finally, as a Catholic organization, Maryknoll objects to the idea of modifying the genetic code of plants and animals to be different than that which was created by God. Some may think that they can improve on God's plans, but we believe that it is wiser to respect the will of God. For many centuries, humans have used science to change nature to fit humans' needs. GE crops are a prime example of this mania. We believe this must change and that science should help us understand the workings of nature so that we can change human activities to be in harmony with them. Agroecology tries to do exactly that, which is why we believe it is the best method for current and future food production.

Farming is more than food production

The MOGC is a member of the U.S. Working Group on the Food Crisis, soon to be renamed the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance, a collection of farmer, consumer, community, religious and environmen-

tal organizations working toward "ending poverty by rebuilding local food economies." They argue, and the IAASTD research shows, that agriculture is important for more than just generating food. Farms are not only for growing produce, but guaranteeing livelihoods for robust rural communities. They see firsthand the destructiveness of huge fields of single crop, genetically engineered fields on nature as well as on communities. They know that a healthy rural community depends on smaller, diverse farms that offer work for many more than highly mechanized monocrop plantations. In the majority of countries in the global South where most of the populations remains in the rural sector, it is especially important to guarantee vigorous rural communities.

U.S. trade policy works in many ways to replicate the U.S. agriculture system where a very small percentage of the population works on large, highly mechanized and chemical-dependent farms to produce food for others. Perhaps Mexico is the best example of the failure of that system, seen in the North American Free Trade Agreement that allowed cheap GE corn into that country, forcing millions of farmers off their land into already overpopulated cities or across the dangerous border into the U.S., while contaminating dozens of indigenous species of corn. A similar process is happening in many other countries in the global South.

Real solutions for agriculture

We favor democratically controlled, local and regionally focused agriculture systems that combine new organic technologies with traditional practices to work most in harmony with nature to produce food. Maryknoll missionaries around the world see people using ancient techniques and local seeds to adapt to conditions of drought and excess water, producing well in difficult conditions. Huge inputs of chemicals and foreign technology are not necessary. In fact, dependence on these things are unsustainable both ecologically and financially for small farmers.

Go to www.usfoodcrisisgroup.org for more information.

Faith in action:

Use the MOGC's statement on genetically modified organisms as a reflection tool. It is found on our website in the ecology section; contact our office for a copy if you are unable to access the internet.

Food security: U.S promotes “Feed the Future”

On May 20, the U.S. Agency for International Development revealed its new global food security initiative called “Feed the Future.” The following article affirms some of the positive elements of the program and questions the “whole of government” approach envisioned by the initiative, as Maryknoll experience has revealed that seemingly unrelated U.S. policies and practices can and have had a negative impact on global food security.

In his inaugural address, President Obama made clear his commitment to fight global hunger and to support international farmers: “[T]o the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish.” After several months of gathering public comments and data from country assessments, an interagency team hammered out the details of Feed the Future, the implementation strategy for USAID’s global hunger and food security initiative.

Some of the positive aspects include the fact that the plan incorporates U.S. international commitments, especially the Rome Principles of Sustainable Food Security, endorsed at the 2009 World Summit on Food Security. Additionally, it commits the U.S. to following country-led plans; its goal is to reach small-holder farmers; it recognizes the important role women play in agriculture; and it includes a focus on the vital role of nutrition. Although it includes references to a “whole of government” approach, there appears to be no specific involvement of, nor connection to, key U.S. agencies, policies and practices that have had a huge negative impact on global hunger, especially the U.S. trade representative, U.S. trade policy, research and intellectual property rights, as well as market controls and price volatility.

In terms of trade policy, insistence on trade liberalization and the drive to market U.S. agricultural commodities to poorer countries have in many cases destroyed livelihoods for local farmers and undermined rural development and national food security. In order to make a lasting impact, the U.S. would have to reconcile its trade and development policies so that they reinforce, not undercut, each other. The priority should be to develop strong local markets to increase both the availability of (and affordable access to) healthy, safe and culturally appropriate

foods. And in emergency cases the U.S. should prioritize local and regional procurement of food aid whenever possible in order to provide further support to local farmers’ agricultural production.

Feed the Future will increase agricultural research, but questions remain about whether small holder farmers living in poverty will be able to reap benefits from research that is ultimately patented and sold. Patents on publicly funded agricultural research should remain in the public domain to encourage ongoing innovations in socially and environmentally appropriate technologies. It would be most appropriate for Feed the Future research to involve and directly assist farmers at the community level.

The Feed the Future initiative was unveiled at an all day event in Washington, D.C. sponsored by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, an independent, nonpartisan think tank. Although no particular technology is highlighted in Feed the Future’s implementation plan, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack made it clear that the U.S. will be helping farmers to understand the benefits of genetically modified and other advanced technologies that are used widely in the United States. Vilsack feels that these technologies are vital to increasing yields in response to the challenge of world hunger.

In analyzing the situation, countless researchers have discovered that globally there is enough food produced each year to make every person living on the planet nice and fat. But having access to enough nutritious food is a bigger issue than crop yields. In 2003 a team of 400 scientists funded by the World Bank concluded that agroecological approaches (investing in understanding site-specific practices for soil preservation, crop rotation, conservation, forestry and water) would have the most success in responding to hunger, development needs and to climate change threats in their compressive report, *The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)*. Feed the Future should heed the IAASTD findings rather than quickly technology tied to a system of food production and global trading where corporate concentration ensures that fewer and fewer corporations control more and more of the food we eat. (See related story on page 12.)

NewsNotes has often reported on how agri-

cultural price spikes and volatility in U.S. markets have also contributed to increased hunger in developing countries, many of which are dependent on food imports and rely on U.S. markets for predictable purchase prices. The Interfaith Working Group on Global Hunger and Food Security recommends that Feed the Future implementers work with the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission and

Congress to ensure that excessive commodity speculation does not harm vulnerable populations in the developing world, and encourages the U.S. to foster local and regional food commodity reserves so that developing countries can better cope with price shocks or crop failures.

Read the Feed the Future implementation plan at <http://feedthefuture.gov/>

Climate change: “Dirty Air” act defeated

Despite the recent defeat of Senate Resolution 26 – known as the “Dirty Air” Act by its opponents – its uncomfortably close vote gives evidence of the hold that polluters have over elected officials and of senators’ unflagging resolve to choose “big oil” and “dirty coal” over clean energy and the health and safety of U.S. families. This resolution, advanced by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), proposed to cripple the Environmental Protection Agency’s authority to use the Clean Air Act to crack down on the U.S.’s biggest polluters and to protect the health and welfare of U.S. citizens from greenhouse gas pollution. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns intern Mary Gaertner contributed this article.

In 1970, the Clean Air Act (CAA) was signed into law by President Nixon, and subsequently became the U.S.’s most successful air pollution control law. Under the CAA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with identifying and regulating major sources of air pollution. Since 1990, emissions of six common air pollutants (ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and lead) have declined by 41 percent, saving hundreds of thousands of lives and improving the health of U.S. citizens. The CAA also saves money — when the human health, human welfare, and environmental benefits under the CAA were compared to the costs of illness, premature death, decrease in worker productivity, etc., which would have occurred without the passage of the CAA, it was found that the CAA created benefits valued at \$22.2 trillion in its first two decades alone, 42 times greater than the



actual costs of its regulations.

In 2007, a Supreme Court case (*Massachusetts v. EPA*, U.S. 497) ruled that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the leading cause of climate change, are air pollutants covered under the CAA and held that the EPA administrator would have to determine whether or not emissions of greenhouse gases from new motor vehicles cause or contribute to air pollution that endangers public health or welfare.

In December 2009, the “endangerment finding” designating GHGs a threat to public health was signed by EPA administrator Lisa Jackson and published in the Federal Register. As stated in the 2007 Supreme Court ruling, the EPA is now required to regulate GHG emissions under the CAA even without passage of climate change legislation. Under this authority, the EPA proposes to focus on only the biggest polluters that have long been subject to similar standards for other pollutants. These regulations will ensure that the largest emitters use the best available technologies to reduce GHG emissions and move to clean energy.

The CAA and the EPA are the United States’ strongest existing tools for reducing carbon pollution, yet several members of the Senate want to disable them. While those supporting the Murkowski resolution argue that it should be up to Congress, and not the EPA, to decide how to regulate climate change, the endangerment finding is one tool the administration holds to pressure lawmakers to pass climate legislation.

Thankfully, the Murkowski resolution was defeated in the Senate by a vote of 53-47, but this is too close of a margin for those seeking meaningful climate change legislation. By voting in favor of the resolution, 47 senators — all 41 Republicans and

six Democrats — signaled their discomfort with the administration using federal policy to reduce GHGs. The votes of the six Democrats further demonstrate a margin of mutiny that, if translated to a vote on climate legislation, could spell disaster for the current energy bills under consideration, since 60 votes are needed to pass a climate change bill.

In spite of this small victory over big oil interests, other recently proposed pieces of legislation also aim to disable the CAA. Two of the climate change bills under consideration—the American Clean Energy and Security Act (HR 2454), passed in the House last June, and the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (APA Act, S. 1733), recently proposed by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT)—repeal important sections of the CAA and strip the EPA's authority to set a cap on the permissible amount of carbon pollution. A new bill from Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), co-sponsored by

six moderate Democrats, proposes to ban any EPA regulation on GHG emissions for two years; this bill may even garner additional support from those who voted in favor of the Murkowski resolution.

When more than seven out of 10 U.S. citizens support government regulation of greenhouse gases as air pollutants, and when even more (86 percent) say the government should limit business's emissions of air pollution, the answer is not disabling the only successful tool the U.S. has in place to combat climate change. Sen. Murkowski and her industry lobbyists have been denied their resolution to reverse gains in clean air and public health. But this is not enough. The Senate must move immediately to pass the strongest possible climate legislation. One way forward would be for the Senate to take up the CLEAR Act co-sponsored by Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) (See following article.)

Climate change: CLEAR Act a clear winner

On April 20, a drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico exploded, killing 11 crew members and bursting a pipe 5,000 feet below the surface. Considered the worst oil disaster in U.S. history, the resulting disaster has gushed thousands of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico each day. Attempts to plug the leak have failed, and the government has stopped virtually all current and new offshore drilling activity until an investigation is conducted into the spill. This article was written by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns intern Mary Gaertner.

President Obama's initial plans to expand offshore drilling were supported by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) through a provision included in the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (APA Act, S.1733). However, the lengthy oil spill clean-up has shifted political opinion; Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), one of the original sponsors of the bill, has stated that the bill cannot get the votes needed to pass.

While the prospects for passing the APA look dim, the Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal Act (CLEAR Act, S.2877), an alternative climate change bill sponsored by Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) — which does not include provisions for increased offshore drill-

ing — may just be a better option for climate change legislation this year. Demonstrating renewed interest in the bill, five senators have recently asked the Energy Information Administration (EIA) to analyze the CLEAR cap-and-dividend model, signaling their interest in a viable alternative.

CLEAR differs from the APA in several key areas in which CLEAR comes out ahead.

Offsets and carbon emission reductions: While APA uses offsets (projects in renewable energy or energy efficiency that substitute for carbon emission reductions) to meet its emission reduction requirements, CLEAR treats such projects as additional programs in order to ensure reductions in carbon emissions. In addition, the CLEAR Act would not create the dangerous carbon derivatives market that the APA would.

Emission allowances: In APA, up to 51 percent of emission allowances — permission to emit one ton of greenhouse gases — will be distributed among electricity, natural gas, and oil companies, while the nuclear power industry will receive tens of billions of dollars in loan guarantees and tax credits. Due to these free giveaways, price signals will be minimized; consumers will not fully experience the rising fuel prices that result from placing limits on carbon emissions. Yet clear and consistent price signals pro-

vide the motivation for consumers to become more energy efficient. CLEAR offers no free giveaways – all emission allowances are auctioned – and lets oil prices rise as a way of encouraging new technologies and energy efficiency.

At the same time, CLEAR protects consumers by distributing 75 percent of auction revenues to the U.S. population. Under this system, it is estimated that the bottom 65-70 percent of all families would see a net financial gain, as the payments would exceed the money these families must pay for energy, even accounting for rising fuel prices.

APA, on the other hand, fully compensates only those living below 150 percent of the poverty line for rising fuel prices. For families between 150 and 250 percent of the poverty line (\$16,000/year and \$27,000/year for an individual, respectively), a small amount of income tax rebates is offered; however, as this rebate is funded by only 2.5 percent of the auction revenues, it is inadequate to compensate consumers.

International adaptation: In spite of its evident advantages, CLEAR does need one major improvement: to allocate funds for international adaptation. The United States, as the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, has the responsibility to assist those

countries most impacted by global warming. As the bill now stands, the remaining 25 percent of the auction revenues not returned to the U.S. public will be placed in the Clean Energy Reinvestment Trust (CERT) Fund. This revenue is not specifically accounted for, though the bill highlights some potential uses that include adaptation projects.

If some of the CERT Fund is allocated for international adaptation, CLEAR will outdo APA, as APA provides no revenue for international adaptation until 2019, and even then it only allocates three percent of the auction revenues. This is too long to wait for much-needed aid for the most affected countries.

Both climate change bills need improvements, but CLEAR is a better starting point for climate change legislation, as it includes zero offsets, no carbon derivatives market, no free giveaways, full or more than full compensation for the majority of the U.S. public, and a potential revenue source for international adaptation.

Faith in action:

Call your senators and ask them to take the lead in responding to climate change by co-sponsoring the CLEAR Act, S. 2877.

Migration: Bishops issue joint statement

In June, Catholic bishops from the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Central America and the Caribbean met for a consultation on migration. They issued a joint statement calling for protection, hospitality, service and justice to immigrants throughout the hemisphere. The statement called on the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration to affirm the country's tradition as a nation of immigrants and "reform U.S. immigration law to allow migrants who work hard in the U.S. economy to enjoy the benefits of legal protection." To read the entire statement, visit www.usccb.org or contact the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. Excerpts follow.

... We offer several reflections on the current situation regarding migration in this hemisphere, consistent with our long-held view that persons on the move should be protected from harm while in transit and welcomed with hospitality, service, and justice. This view is consistent with the Gospel of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who calls upon all to "welcome the stranger" and who declared "for whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me."...

It is a reality that in this hemisphere the human dignity of persons on the move continues to be violated by governmental and nongovernmental actors alike in source, transit, and receiving nations. Migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers are mistreated and exploited both by government officials and law enforcement officials, as well as smugglers and other criminal elements as they flee poverty, natural disaster, violence, or persecution. The explosion of human trafficking in this hemisphere is a scourge which continues to grow, victimizing men, women, and children.

... We also acknowledge and support the right of our governments to ensure the integrity of their borders and the common good of their citizenry. We strongly believe, however, that these goals can be achieved and the rule of law preserved without

violating human rights. Governments can and must collaborate effectively to achieve regional development and stability.

With these perspectives in mind, we call attention to specific issues which should be addressed on a regional basis, with cooperation from all governments of this hemisphere:

Promotion of sustainable economic development: The factors which compel people to migrate in search of work are primarily, but not solely, economic. Families in poorer countries struggle to meet their most basic needs and living-wage jobs remain scarce. Root economic causes of migration must be addressed so that migrants can remain in their home countries and support their families. The impact of current and proposed trade agreements and agricultural policy in the region must be reviewed in terms of the displacement of small farmers and workers, and subsequent migration.

For example, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), touted initially as the key to economic development in the region, has failed to reach those on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder. International institutions, such as international lending institutions, have not adequately addressed the needs of the poor in the region. ...

Economic drivers of violence: Economic insecurity and deprivation add to a number of social issues that together provide fertile breeding grounds for violence. The lack of economic opportunity as well as the lack of a sense of social meaning, especially among younger adults, fuels the resort to underground and illicit activities in many of the countries of the hemisphere. The increasing power of

drug smuggling networks must be combated, both by law enforcement efforts but also by eradicating the market for these illicit substances, particularly in the United States.

Protection of migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable people in transit: Persons on the move in this hemisphere are subject to exploitation, abuse, and prolonged detention in all countries. Laws must be examined and reformed in each country to establish mechanisms to ensure safe passage, protection, and due process for migrants and their families, while ensuring that violent criminals are constrained.

Scourge of human trafficking: ... Governments and nongovernmental actors must work together to address the economic and social factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking. They must root out trafficking networks, and provide rescue and services to victims. Special attention must be paid to children, who are the most vulnerable victims.

Assistance for Haiti: We call upon all governments of this hemisphere to provide special care to the people of Haiti as they attempt to rebuild their country after the January earthquake. We urge all nations to continue with their generosity and support, but also to apply and amend their migration laws to accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, Haitians and their families who can no longer remain in Haiti.

... As pastors, we have an obligation to defend the rights of all persons, particularly the most vulnerable members of the human community. We call upon all members of the Catholic community in our nations to stand in solidarity with persons on the move and to work for their just and humane treatment.

International Criminal Court Review Conference

From May 31 to June 11, about 4,600 people attended the first Review Conference for the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Kampala, Uganda to assess implementation thus far of the Rome Statute, which established the ICC on July 1, 2002. The ICC now has 111 state parties, 18 judges, and field offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad. It is conducting investigations in the DRC, Uganda, CAR, Kenya and Sudan, and has issued 13 arrest warrants for eight cases.

An article by Samar Al-Bulushi and Adam Branch published in Pambazuka News described some of the challenges facing the court: "The fact that it has prosecuted only Africans has provoked charges of neocolonialism and racism; its decision to indict certain actors and not others has triggered suspicion of the court's susceptibility to power politics; and its interventions into ongoing armed conflicts have elicited accusations that the ICC is pursuing its own brand of justice at the cost of enflaming war and disregarding the interests of victims."

The conference, according to IRIN, was characterized by “lively debates on the impact of the Rome Statute on survivors and affected communities; complementarity, cooperation, peace and justice; and the crime of aggression ...” In fact, it adopted a resolution by which it amended the Rome Statute to include a definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the Court could exercise jurisdiction with respect to the crime.



Some civil society organizations called on states that have signed the Rome Statute to enact comprehensive implementing legislation, making genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity crimes under domestic law and providing for cooperation with the ICC. Others called for the promotion of victims’ rights, including compensation, and insisted that the court be even-handed in the application of justice.

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, said. “When I meet Africans from all walks of life, they demand justice: from their own courts if possible, from international courts if no credible alternative exists,” he said. “The ICC does not supplant the authority of national courts. Rather, it is a court of last resort, governed by the principle of complementarity.”

As the conference began, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, “We are witnessing the birth of a new age of accountability. We hope to take stock of the Court’s progress and strengthen it for the future.” He hailed the presence in Kampala of the U.S., saying, “I understand the U.S. is very seriously reviewing its decisions,” he added, referring to the Bush administration’s strong opposition to the ICC. (IRIN)

The United States participated in the conference as a non-state party for the first time, which many who support the court, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, saw as a step in the right direction. But, according to Al-Bulushi and Branch, one form of increased cooperation by the U.S. with the ICC would be of great concern.

About the challenge of enforcement, they write, “[T]here is another aspect of the court’s role in Africa that will require scrutiny going forward: enforcement. Lacking its own enforcement mechanism, the court relies upon cooperating states to execute its ar-

rest warrants. The ICC has found, however, that many states, even if willing to cooperate, often lack the capacity to execute warrants, especially in cases of ongoing conflict or when suspects can cross international borders.... out of 13 arrest warrants issued, only four suspects are in custody. Apparently, having concluded that African states are either unwilling or unable to act quickly or forcefully enough to apprehend suspects, the court has begun to seek support from the one country that has shown itself willing and able to wield military force across the globe: the United States.”

The ICC’s Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo and Special Adviser to the Prosecutor Béatrice Le Fraper du Hellen have both expressed their interest in U.S. assistance with the arrest of sought war criminals, including Sudan’s President al-Bashir, Joseph Kony in Uganda, and Bosco Ntaganda in the DRC.

The U.S. has declared its interest in cooperating with the court as a non-state party observer, for example, by supporting the particular prosecutions that are already underway or (as suggested in a recent Council on Foreign Relations report) by “boosting its cooperation with the court in such areas as training, funding, the sharing of intelligence and evidence and the apprehension of suspects.”

Al-Bulushi and Branch continue, “This proposed alliance between the U.S. military and the ICC has elicited little reaction from the human rights community despite the devastating consequences it may produce. At heart is the question of what it will mean for justice and the rule of law if the ICC comes to rely heavily on the military capacity of a single state – a state with its own military agenda and interests in Africa – as its enforcement arm, in particular when that state declares itself above the very law it claims to enforce But the price paid by the ICC will be trivial compared to the very dangerous possibility that this alliance could help justify and expand U.S. militarization in Africa, in particular in conjunction with AFRICOM (Africa Command), at a dramatic cost to peace and justice in the continent.” We echo their concern.

Read their entire article at Pambazuka News #483, www.pambazuka.org.

UN: Voices for sustainability

One of the most important understandings of the modern period is that Earth's resources are limited. Petroleum is a case in point: A century ago it was an unquestioned assumption that oil was virtually limitless, sparking the creation of a way of life dependent on it. Now, the crisis in the Gulf of Mexico has become emblematic of social and economic development that was ultimately shortsighted and unsustainable. This is problematic not only for the present but for future generations of people who may inherit deeply flawed social and economic systems as well as a degraded environment and natural resources that have been used up. It ought not to be forgotten that in the past there were voices offering an alternative vision. Today, as well, there are strong voices that articulate the demand for development sustainability, lest future generations be consigned to increasing hardship on a depleted planet.

The United Nations has taken the lead in shaping discourse around limited resources and environmental degradation for almost 40 years. In 1972, the UN held an international conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. This conference opened a lasting debate around the concept of Global Environmental Governance (GEG).

In 1983, the UN established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). WCED produced the broad political concept of sustainable development: development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The integration of social, economic and environmental sustainability is fundamental to this definition. It was the unequivocal opinion of the WCED that civil society would have to be deeply involved in creating global sustainable development. Governments alone could not possibly achieve it.

In 1992 the UN held the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference accepted the definition of sustainable development articulated by the WCED and produced Agenda 21, which is a blueprint for implementing sustainable development in the 21st century. The summit called on the UN to develop a structure, specifically including civil society, to encompass the work of creating sustainable development policy. In addition, the summit issued a call for the creation of an Earth Charter through

a process of broad, global consultation. Lastly the summit created the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in order to create a global agreement on limiting greenhouse gases.

The importance of the Earth Summit cannot be exaggerated. The UN, with the collaboration of civil society, has systematically implemented each of the points of the summit's mandate. While it is clear that global development has continued on an unsustainable trajectory, a different vision began to be articulated and, over the years, has become sharpened and strengthened. The Earth Charter, conceptualized and written with extensive international public participation, is a profoundly inspirational document; it is a high water marker for the expression of universal moral and ethical principles shaped by engagement with contemporary knowledge, experience and insight. (Read it at www.earthcharter.org)

Another voice offered by the UN is the 2005 document on the Precautionary Principle. This is the continuation of serious and diligent work to create an ethical framework for the application of scientific and technological work.

Due to the complex and interconnected nature of the issues of unsustainability before the global community today, the UN has called for a new Earth Summit, dubbed Rio+20, to be held in 2012. The seminal work of the new summit will be to define Green Economy in the light of sustainability. In addition, it is expected that the summit will adopt alleviation of poverty as the measure for evaluating sustainable development systems, policies and practices. (To be involved in the Rio+20 preparations go to stakeholdersforum.org.)

Lastly, the new president of the UN General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, in outlining the top priorities of his tenure, included the environment and environmental governance, and called for increased efforts towards the achievement of a green economy.

These are all voices that summon the human community to a noble vision. It has been said that the noblest thing a person can do is act in such a way that future persons will benefit from one's actions of today. This applies to planting a tree and to protecting the environment against pollution and toxicity. It also applies to using natural resources in a way that is calculated to guarantee enough for others of the future.

UN: Report on recent CSD gathering

After the UN Earth Summit in 1992, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created. A unique feature of CSD is the systematic inclusion of the voice of civil society in its operational design, achieved through a structure called major groups, which include women, farmers, youth, business and industry, indigenous people, local governments, science and technology, trade unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Maryknoll participates in the work of the UN under the accredited classification of NGO. As an NGO, Maryknoll is a member of the UN Conference of NGOs' Committee on Sustainable Development. While the CSD meets only once a year for two weeks of official sessions, the preparation for the sessions takes place throughout the year through the Committee members. The work is assiduous and requires the investment of both energy and resources.

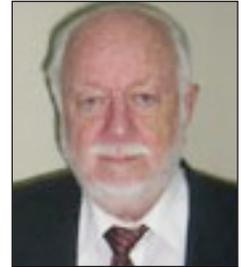
NGOs are able to arrange for resource people to present material related to the themes under consideration by the Commission during its annual sessions through side events and through brief, organized interventions during the official sessions. During the CSD's 18th session (May 3-14), Maryknoll sponsored a speaker, Trinidad Carlos, a human rights lawyer who has been working with an indigenous community in Peru's Andean highlands. Her work has been to claim the remediation of the ancestral domain of the community after extreme land degradation and mineral depletion on the part of a large-scale mining corporation that left the land and water devastated, covered with hazardous toxic waste. Livelihood was destroyed and the people left impoverished. At the UN the well documented and movingly presented case delineated by Carlos attracted widespread attention; it was understood as emblematic of global unsustainable mining practices that beg for justice for what has been stolen from indigenous people. It functioned as a container holding thousands of voices from around the world demanding an end to large-scale extractive mining that violates the land, its resources, and the human rights



Trinidad Carlos

of people. The generalized movement of money and resources from poor communities and countries to wealthy individuals and corporations around the world was deplored.

The chair of the CSD's 18th session was Dr. Luis Alberto Ferrate-Felice of Guatemala. In his opening remarks, Ferrate-Felice noted that mining is a very sensitive issue. He said, "While it contributes to income generation and government revenues, it can also be a source of social conflict and environmental and health hazards." He highlighted the need to assist communities directly impacted by mining activities as well as to manage mineral resources so as to provide greater benefits for a country's citizens.



Luis Alberto Ferrate-Felice

When participating in a briefing with the NGO community, Ferrate-Felice both lauded NGOs for their work and chided them for not doing more. He cited the overwhelming presence of for-profit industrialized mining representatives attending the sessions and, above all, lobbying governments for greater corporate benefits and liberalization of government policy. He challenged everyone to a greater effort to represent poor and marginalized people, claiming that this can only be done by the NGO community because of its first hand knowledge of the reality of the lives of disenfranchised people. He did not hesitate to speak from a position of high moral and ethical standard in defense of the environment, in defense of human rights and, particularly, in defense of the rights of indigenous people to free, prior and informed consent before governments allow outside mining companies onto their land.

In its 19th session in 2011, CSD will continue with the topic of mining as one of its main issues. The intention will be to carry forward the information gleaned during the 18th session in 2010, for the formulation of international policy in 2011. The months between now and May 2011 will demand arduous work in order to have a chance at shaping mining policy so that it is truly sustainable. Incumbent upon NGOs will be finding the vehicle, the sponsorship, for enabling affected people to speak before the United Nations with clarity and to lobby tirelessly in behalf of sustainability.

UN: Gender equality entity created

On July 2, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to create a new gender equality entity, "UN Women." Maryknoll and other civil society groups have worked for this since the establishment of a System-Wide Coherence Panel for UN Reform in 2006. The following is an announcement from the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign.

Charlotte Bunch of the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University, a founding member of the GEAR Campaign, stated, "We have high expectations for this new agency to be a solid foundation for advancing the human rights of women as central to global policy efforts to reduce poverty and move toward greater realization of peace and democracy in the world. The coalition of women's groups and other social justice, human rights and development organizations that played a pivotal role in this effort will now turn its efforts toward ensuring that the new body has the human and financial resources necessary to succeed."

Particularly notable in the resolution are the paragraphs regarding the importance of civil society participation in the new entity. The body must have increased operational presence at the country level including engagement with women's groups and other civil society organizations invested in gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The GEAR Campaign's global, regional, and national networks will be contacting UN representatives at all levels to work with the transition process and the new Under Secretary-General, once appointed, to ensure they are connected with organizations on the ground ready to provide their expertise and support.

As Patricia Licuanan of the Philippines, GEAR focal point in Asia and previous chair of the Commission on the Status of Women at the time of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing says: "The new gender equality entity will assist countries in their efforts to carry out commitments made in Beijing. Working through the One UN system, we

hope to see UN Women taking the lead in engendering the programs of the UN at the country level."

As the new entity is developed, GEAR supporters will continue to advocate for four major elements critical to its implementation:

- Meaningful, systematic and diverse civil society participation at all levels;
- Strong, country-level operational capacity and universal coverage;
- Ambitious funding with stable and predictable resources aimed at reaching \$1 billion within a few years;
- Strong leadership at the top with an Under Secretary-General who combines a global vision with gender equality expertise on the ground.

The GEAR Campaign is a network of over 300 women's, human rights and social justice groups around the world that have been working for four years to gain UN Member State and UN Secretariat approval for creation of a larger more coherent coordinated UN agency that can advance further the UN's mandate of working for gender equality as a crucial component of development, human rights, humanitarian concerns, peace and security.

The new Gender Equality Entity, to be headed by an Under-Secretary General, will consolidate the four existing UN bodies on women, increase operational capacity at the country level and have gain increased funding for work on women's empowerment and advancement. The UN currently has four separate entities dedicated to women's issues which will be combined in the new entity: the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OS-AGI). Bringing these together and coordinating their work more with gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system should enable the UN and governments to deliver more effectively on their obligations and many commitments to advance gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights.

For information, go to the GEAR Campaign website – www.gearcampaign.org – or contact the GEAR Campaign at: gearcampaign@gmail.com.



Resources

- 1) **Vessel of Clay: The inspirational journey of Sister Carla:** August 2010 marks the 30th anniversary of the death of Maryknoll Sister Carol (Carla) Piette, who died in a flash flood in El Salvador. This book, written by Carla's lifelong friend, Maryknoll Affiliate Jacqueline Hansen Maggiore, tells the story of Carla's mission work as she accompanied the people who suffered through violent regimes: She spent the 1970s living under the repressive Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, and when Monseñor Oscar Romero called for experienced missionaries to help the people of El Salvador in a time of lawless violence, Carla volunteered, along with her close friend Ita Ford. During their few months in El Salvador, Carla and Ita worked tirelessly to rescue refugees — mainly women and children — amid extreme atrocities, danger, and hostility to the church. Carla is remembered as Martyr of Charity in the local community of San Antonio los Ranchos, which gathers each August for a memorial at the river where she died. *Vessel of Clay* is a revealing story of the personal struggles of this sensitive, compassionate, courageous woman of faith as she battled her own insecurities. 200 pages, \$18. Available through University of Chicago Press, 800-621-2736.
- 2) **Pax Christi International newsletter:** Sign up for Pax Christi International's free monthly newsletter to learn more about its work and the efforts of its member organizations around the world. Go to www.paxchristi.net to subscribe.
- 3) **Water and Conflict: Incorporating Peacebuilding into Water Development:** Former Maryknoll lay missionary Jason Gehrig, who worked on water issues in Bolivia, helped create this new resource for Catholic Relief Services. It is intended to assist water development practitioners, civil society peacebuilders, and human rights advocates seeking to integrate water and peacebuilding in their work. The purpose is twofold: to furnish a conceptual framework for understanding problems of scarcity and equity, and to provide practical guidance and tools for action. The text distills an extensive literature on water, conflict, and cooperation produced in recent years by researchers and development practitioners. Case studies and reflections are included to keep theory grounded in the reality. It's available as a free downloadable file from the CRS website; it includes background on global water issues along with some Catholic social teaching on the issue. Go to <http://www.crsprogramquality.org/2009/08/water-and-conflict/> to download.
- 4) **Film: "The Forgotten Bomb":** This new feature-length documentary examines the political and legal implications of nuclear weapons, but also digs deeper, into the cultural and psychological reasons behind the arsenal's existence. The filmmakers' quest takes us from the homes of *hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors) in Japan, to an abandoned uranium mine in New Mexico, to an underground Titan missile silo in Arizona. Through interviews with atomic scientists, politicians, authors, statesmen, and atomic bomb survivors, "The Forgotten Bomb" examines what The Bomb means to us all, and why we need to think about it again, now, even though the Cold War is long over. For more information on its distribution, visit www.theforgottenbomb.com.
- 5) **Justice for Immigrants Parish Kit:** Justice for Immigrants, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' campaign to educate and advocate for immigration reform, has updated its parish kit. These downloadable resources discuss a wide range of topics, including how to reach out to the media, tips for pastors who are developing homilies on immigration related issues, and a fact sheet debunking commonly held myths that some opponents of reform claim are facts. Find the materials here: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/parish-kit.html>.
- 6) **A Harvest of Heat: Agribusiness and Climate Change: How six food industry giants are warming the planet:** This report, commissioned by Agribusiness Action Initiatives (AAI) North America, is downloadable at <http://www.agribusinessaction.org/clearinghouse/documents/AgriBizClimate4-8short.pdf>.