

QEW United Nations Working Group

October 2016-April 2017 Report

Members

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QEW ORGANICATIONAL & UNITED NATIONS – RELATED ACTIVITY

April 2017

I. Unified Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) Vision UNWG & Atlanta Steering Committee Meeting Attendance Discussion

Background: The UNWG noted during its April meeting that only three of its members will attend the QEW Steering Committee meeting in Atlanta. The group connected lackluster attendance to the lack of unified QEW vision and/or organizationally shared projects.

The group discussed the potential for "un-siloing" QEW internal (*committees*) and external operations (*relationships with Friends' organizations*), and the fact that outreach permeates the work of every QEW committee.

The UNWG considered how the outreach function could be a starting place for QEW to embark on a clarifying reconfiguration of its approach to its work. The goal is to better facilitate the emergence of a unified vision. This might set the sail for enhancing the organization's impact on complex, interwoven 21st century challenges.

Outcome: UNWG was in unity about: 1) seasoning the "unsiloing" issue, 2) charging the three UNWG Friends who will be present in Atlanta to sit in discernment with this issue, 3) include Mary Jo Klinge, Clerk of the Outreach Committee in future threshing, discernment, and seasoning of this issue in anticipation of the UNWG and Outreach Committees bringing it to the Clerks' Table and subsequently to the QEW corporate body.

II. Industrial Beef and Dairy Cattle Production & the Relocalization of Food Production

Phil Emmi prepared a paper on the topic of industrial beef and dairy cattle production and meat consumption entitled, *Food: A Measure of Our Humanity*. UNWG work on this issue emerged as a need for documentation from findings of the group that is working on the UN side events (**see below**) as agricultural land use was researched.

Sheree Cammer has done significant research on the issue. Much of her work focuses on sustainable, "living systems" ways of raising livestock and sequestering carbon in the soil. The UNWG was in unity regarding Phil and Sheree working independently on complementary papers.

III. UNWG High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Side Events – See Website: <http://bit.ly/2oNjrMI>

UNWG Circle on the UN International Decade for People of African Descent: QEW-led Earthcare Coalition is working on, a) a panel discussion side event to be held in the UN, and b) a parallel workshop event for NGOs to inform the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

UN Side Event

Four panelists are confirmed for the side event, and we know what type of representation we need in the additional panelist positions. Confirmed panelists to date are:

1. Mustafa Ali, former Founding Executive Director of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Environmental Justice,
2. Paul Okumu (*or representative*) The Africa Platform, Nairobi Kenya,
3. Veronica Womack, Esq. Board Member, Black Belt Justice Center,
4. Drs. Robert Bullard or Beverly Wright, Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) Environmental Consortium.

The Earthcare Coalition is negotiating on-UN-premises event space with the office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights and the Permanent Mission to Ghana to the UN.

UN Parallel Special Event

Date & Time: Wednesday, July 12 at 1:00-3:00 PM

Location:

The International Social Justice Commission UN Office
221 East 52nd Street
New York, New York, 10022

Diaspora Earthcare Coalition Communications:

1. Our website is online here: <http://bit.ly/2oNjrMI>
2. A google group listserv has been established
3. Pages have been added to the QEW website.

Earthcare Coalition Organizing: A sociocracy process has been put in place for coordination of Diaspora networking and governance. Three “circles” have been established to organize the work underway::

1. **Land Circle:** is convened by Unitarian Universalist Minister and [Black Land Liberation Initiative](#) activist Sara Green. The Land Circle is collecting data using a template question-set which is circulated among partners throughout the Diaspora. The template was developed by the Black Belt Justice Center.
 - Data used in case studies in key Diaspora regions will provide content for the UN Panel Discussion Side Event.
 - This circle meets weekly via video-chat.
2. **Food Education Circle:** convened by Tarsha Gary, a renowned chef, food educator, environmental activist from Houston Texas.
 - Consists of a database of 200 + people in all aspects of food production and education at multiple scales.
 - A core cadre for this circle begins meeting during the first week in May.

- Tarsha is working collaboratively with Myrna Belgrave (**see below**) to orchestrate simultaneous Vegetarian Festivals Houston, TX and in several Caribbean locations at the end of October 2017. Myrna represents our organizing partner, the Brahma Kumaris (Barbados, NY UN Office, Africa Office in Kenya) Barbados and the Caribbean.

3. **Discernment Circle:** convened by Pamela Boyce Simms and populated by delegates from other circles maintains contact with, facilitates information flow among other circles.

IV. UNWG and Development Committee Fundraising Collaboration: The QEW Development Committee with a tremendous effort of David Millar and Jack Bradin who are members of both Development and UNWG Committees posted a crowdsource funding page for the UN side events found at this link: <http://bit.ly/2mrEoO2>

1. **Fundraising:** The UNWG and Development Committee collaborated to initiate a \$5,650 crowdsource funding campaign using the “Crowdrise” online platform.
 - \$650 was added to a \$5,000 budget to cover fundraising platform and QEW administrative costs.
 - UNWG provided information and text needed to create the landing page.

2. Side Event Budget:

\$700 Parallel Event Facility
 \$550 UN Broadcast & Conference Support Section (BCSS) web-streaming services - side event
 \$800 Parallel Event refreshments
 \$500 Materials production (parallel & side event)
 \$300 Supplies and Exhibition production materials!
 \$1200 Panelist and workshop presenter travel cost reimbursements
 \$950 Panelist and workshop presenter stipends

\$5,000

March 2017

- I. **Indigenous Issues:** Barb Adams attended a briefing on indigenous issues in Washington DC and shared the *End of Mission Statement* by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz: <http://bit.ly/2oR7xTP>.

II. UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Outcome: A Pre-High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Earthcare Coalition Strategy Session will take place in Chicago, June 2-3.

The UN Working Group “takeaway” from the CSW is a collaboration which emerged from networking and a series of meetings with a Board member of [Bread for the World](#), and Convener of [The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference](#). Both have joined the Earthcare Coalition, and Bread for the World proposes to co-convene and fund a pre-High Level Political Forum

(HLPF) event for African Diaspora champions who are focused on food sovereignty in Chicago on June 2-3. The event will be a Diaspora strategy session to build momentum for the HLPF.

III. UNWG discernment of the potential impact of the new administration on the United Nations

- The United States now spends 10 billion dollars on the United Nations which constitutes 22% of the UN budget.
- The US contribution constitutes 28% of the UN peacekeeping budget.
- While 22% of the UN budget is the largest dollar amount contributed by a UN member nation, it does not begin to approximate the amount that the US is actually required to pay as a function of the country's GDP upon which UN dues is assessed.
- The new administration proposes cutting the US contribution to the UN by 50% and drastically reducing the foreign aid budget under State/USAID which would: a) shrink American humanitarian aid around the world, including to the 4 countries (20 million people) known to be on the brink of war and climate-change induced starvation, and, b) devastate UNDP and UNICEF programs which are the sole health and food lifelines for millions.
- UN stalwarts privately point out that the UN has successfully weathered American stonewalling before under the George W. Bush administration which refused to pay US UN dues for years. The Bush administration finally paid when they approached the end of a grace period, after which the US would have lost its vote. Everyone anticipates that the Nordic, Western European, Canadian and Australian governments will step forward to fill at least some of the gap.

December 2017:

- UNWG UN grounds passes were renewed. Additional UN DPI passes will supplement the number of passes available.
- Andrea Bean laid down membership in the UN Working Group and QEW due to a move.