

Unitarian Universalist Association United Nations Office
777 United Nations Plaza, 7G
New York, NY 10017, USA
www.uua.org/un

Concept Note

Intergenerational Spring Seminar Theme Panel

Theme: “When Crisis Calls – Advancing Just Migration for All”

Panel Title: “Confronting Climate Forced Displacement and the Global Migration Crisis”

Organizers: Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Fiji to the United Nations

Date: Friday, April 6, 2018 10:30am – 12:00pm

Venue:

ECOSOC Chamber (UNHQ) or UN Church Center (777 UN Plaza – 2nd Floor)

Objective:

This event will contribute to the integration of a climate change and human rights perspective into discussions of forced migration and refugee support. The event will build momentum towards a more appropriate global response to the threat of climate change – including establishing international laws that protect people, including indigenous communities, who are displaced because of climate change. Speakers will discuss the interconnections between climate change, human rights, development, and migration justice, emphasizing the need for international migration policy to recognize the unique challenges of marginalized communities on the move. The event will address the actions that have been undertaken to confront the global migration crisis and recommendations for how youth and adult members of civil society and especially faith-based organizations can support these global efforts.

Key Issues:

A pattern of climate-induced migration is seen across the globe as local ecosystems and habitats are destroyed either by drought, flooding, fires, or other extreme weather events. Sea level rises due to global warming will inundate coastal areas, cause fresh water sources to be destroyed by sea water and submerge entire island nations or major parts of these nations. As fields are no longer able to grow crops and entire cities are unable to find clean safe water sources, the people living in areas threatened by climate change are forced to leave and find elsewhere to live. The numbers of these climate refugees will only grow as the effects of climate change become more and more pronounced. Part of the global response to the refugee crisis must include specific responses to those whose lands are made un-livable by the changing climate. An emphasis must be placed both on mitigating the causes of forced migration (whether from



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climate change, armed conflict, poverty, and/or etc.), as well as strengthening efforts to support, welcome, and empower all refugees.

Speakers:

- Moderator: Bruce Knotts (UU-UNO)
- Jenifer Fenton (Yale University)
- Roy Gutman
- Teresa Blumenstein (UNANIMA & NGO Committee on Migration)

Expected Outcomes:

- Recognition of the particular situation of refugees fleeing Ocean states and coastal areas due to rising sea levels and other effects of climate change.



Structure of Panel: (Total time: 90minutes)

- Bruce – open panel and provide background – 5 min
- Bruce – to give overview of the state of global migration (and the need to take a closer look at climate change, as a driver of migration and conflict), and the role of the UU-UNO (and its constituencies) in advancing this need – 15min
- Jenifer – to discuss the main complexities of communicating the refugee crisis, particularly in the US– 15 min
- Roy – to provide context of what’s happening in the Middle-East, in particular Syria and the role of media – 15 min
- Teresa – to talk about the role of NGO’s in advancing climate change and forced displacement in the UN-system – 15 min
- Questions – 25 min

All panelists should submit their bio’s and photos to Allison Hess. If you would like to bring materials to pass along to folks, please let us know – we can probably set aside a table if needed.

Either room we use will have media capabilities, so feel free to use slides, images and videos in your discussion and send copies of your materials to Allison Hess by Thursday Apr 5th.

Contact:

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