



## **GOOD NEWS SERVICE #39: LATE FALL '15**

**Editorial:** “If we don’t know the solution to the IS menace, and we manifestly don’t, we should at least stop fuelling it”, wrote Ernie Regehr in a letter to the Globe and Mail (Nov. 17). “Accepting refugees is the right thing to do; dramatically increasing humanitarian support in the region is critically important. Bolstering Syrian peace talks and pursuing more inclusive governance in Iraq gets closer to addressing the roots of these multiple crises and thus would be worthy added national objectives.” – Ernie Regehr, Waterloo, ON

## **1. RECENT ACTIONS IN CANADA AND AT THE UN**

Nov 14/15, Ottawa. By Randy Weekes.

Action takes place on many levels. A new book is published highlighting the support of more than 800 Order of Canada recipients for eliminating nuclear weapons. A new government is elected in Canada which promises fresh engagement internationally including, potentially, a fresh approach to nuclear disarmament. And at the United Nations General Assembly many voices are raised calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

On October 1, 2015 at a high level meeting commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, many governments affirmed their determination to seek action. Austria noted that 159 nations have declared that the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable under all circumstances. Further, that 117 nations have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

The General Assembly, now underway, has seen a number of initiatives. ICAN (The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) represented NGOs from 98 countries in making the case for eliminating nuclear weapons to the Committee on Disarmament and International Security.

At least three draft resolutions are being considered. South Africa, which disarmed its own nuclear arsenal in 1990, tabled a resolution on the ethical imperatives to prohibit and eliminate all nuclear weapons. Mexico, with the co-sponsorship of numerous other nations is calling for a Working Group to convene in Geneva in early 2016 to deliberate and/or negotiate on effective measures for nuclear disarmament and report back to the General Assembly in October 2016. Iran has sponsored a different motion to establish a similar Working Group.

Will these efforts lead to action? A representative for the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy observed: “Regardless of the short term output of a new working group, its operation would ... keep the momentum going and create an opening for further steps.” (with files from UN.Org, Inter Press Service and ICAN.)

## **2. Myanmar: election result a clear demand for democracy**

November 9 – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has congratulated the people of Myanmar for “their patience, dignity and enthusiasm” in historic elections and has encouraged all stakeholders “to maintain the dignified spirit, calm and respect throughout the completion of the electoral process.”

Prefacing his remarks by saying “more considered comments on the election results will follow during the coming days,” Mr. Ban’s Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, told correspondents at the regular daily briefing at UN Headquarters that the UN chief also commended Myanmar’s Union Election Commission, as well as its various state, regional and local institutions for their important work.

Noting that results of the “momentous event” have started to come in, he said the Secretary-General encouraged “all stakeholders in Myanmar to maintain the dignified spirit, calm and respect throughout the completion of the electoral process.”

### *9 November. From the International Trade Union Confederation:*

The election result in Myanmar, in which the National League for Democracy. NLD’s Aung San Suu Kyi has claimed the party won around 75% of the vote, underlines the strength of commitment of the people of Myanmar to a democratic future. Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said “The people have spoken loud and clear, with an overwhelming result for the NLD... Genuine democracy is the only acceptable future for Myanmar, and the new government must move the country irrevocably on that path. We salute all those who have struggled for decades to bring the country to this point, including the trade union centre CTUM and will continue to stand with them in the quest for genuine democracy, with fundamental workers’ rights as a cornerstone.”

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/myanmar-election-result-a-clear?lang=en>

## **3. UN chief congratulates people of Myanmar on participating in ‘momentous’ polls**

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maintain the dignified spirit, calm and respect throughout the completion of the electoral process.”

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<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsId=52499#.VkGuguaFM5s>

#### **4. UN agency to reduce poverty and increase incomes in rural China**

November 4 – The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has signed a US\$43.5 million financing agreement with the People’s Republic of China in efforts to sustainably reduce rural poverty and improve the livelihoods of rural households in the Liupan Mountain Area of China. The government of China has committed to providing \$42.5 million to support the project. The total project cost will be \$125.3 million. National financial institutions, cooperatives, enterprises and beneficiaries will also contribute.

It is expected the IFAD-funded project will increase incomes for approximately 128,000 poor and vulnerable rural households in seven counties in the Liupan mountain area. The main goal of the project is to reduce poverty by improving agriculture and livestock productivity, increasing opportunities for farmers to access markets, improving land management and addressing the needs of ethnic minorities.

<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2015/73.htm>

#### **5. Burundi and IFAD to combat local food insecurity and malnutrition; add value to smallholder farmers’ products**

3 November, Rome. Via the Good News Agency – The Republic of Burundi and the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) signed an agreement today to finance the second phase of the Value Chain Development Programme (PRODEFI-II). The total cost of the PRODEFI-II is US\$44.8 million.

The new programme will intensify crops and livestock production to improve food security and beneficiaries’ nutritional status. The IFAD’s ASAP funding will be used to increase rural households’ resilience to climate change.

The programme will develop milk and rice production, processing and marketing as well as promote youth employment. To ensure the sustainability and impact, PRODEFI-II will build the capacity of local farmers' organizations through training, particularly in natural resource management. The programme will be implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and will reach 33,534 rural households.  
<http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2015/72.htm>

## **6. Young Africa Works: A Summit for 300 Youth Leaders**

13 November, The MasterCard Foundation is hosting an inaugural Young Africa Works Summit focused on finding practical solutions for youth employment and entrepreneurship within the agricultural sector.

“On October 29-30, we are bringing together approximately 300 key influencers, including youth and representatives from government, development organizations and the private sector to share perspectives and insights on effective approaches for creating economic opportunities for young men and women in agriculture.

The Summit will illustrate that agriculture is an economic activity in which young people can earn a sustainable livelihood rather than just a subsistence income. Enhancing the productivity of agriculture through improved inputs, livestock vaccinations, the use of processing or refrigeration technology and access to market pricing information is also important for increased income generation.

<http://www.mastercardfdn.org/young-africa-works>

## **7. Ghana ADVANCE helps farmers counter climate change**

26 October – Smallholder farmers in northern Ghana, like farmers around the world, are under threat from climate change. To deal with this risk, the ACDI/VOCA-implemented USAID/ADVANCE project promotes climate-smart agriculture practices among smallholder farmers in the region. Climate-smart agriculture involves a range of practices aimed at helping farmers adjust to climate change and increase food production while reducing greenhouse emissions from farming activities. To achieve this, the project promotes minimum tillage, use of cover crops, and early-maturing seed varieties. <http://acdivoca.org/resources/newsroom/news/ghana-advance-helps-farmers-counter-climate-change>



## **8. Australia recently switched on world's first wave power plant**

From the Good News Page, CCPA Monitor via Elaine Hughes: Australia recently switched on the world's first large-scale wave power plant. Fully submerged buoys at the Perth project are tethered to seabed pump units. "These buoys move with the motion of the passing waves and drive the pumps" explained a Carnegie Wave Energy Limited press release. "The pumps pressure fluid which is then used to drive hydro turbines and generators to produce electricity".

*(Motherboard)*

## **9. Mosques in Jordan to receive photovoltaic solar systems**

CCPA Good News Page, April 2015 "It costs about US\$1,800 a month to power and air condition an average mosque in the Middle Eastern country. As energy costs continue to rise, Jordan's Ministries of Energy and Islamic Affairs are coordinating on a plan to install photovoltaic solar systems in all of the country's 6,000 mosques, beginning with 120 mosques this year. As part of the plan, all newly built mosques (about 150 a year) will be fitted with solar panels.

*(The Nomad and Eden Keeper)*

**10, 11, 12: From the Good News Page of the May-June 2015 CCPA Monitor, compiled by Elaine Hughes:**

## **10. New Brunswick joins Quebec, Nova Scotia & Newfoundland and Labrador in prohibiting fracking while impacts are studied.**

"It is responsible and prudent to do our due diligence and get more information", said Energy & Mines Minister Donald Arseneault.

## **11. Seventh largest US Bank stops financing coal mining in Appalachia after 125 actions by the Earth Quaker Action Team.**

PNC Financial Bank announced it will no longer finance mountaintop removal coal mining . The technique has destroyed an estimated 500

mountains in the region in the past five years, increasing cancer and birth defects rates in nearby communities due to pollution.

## **12. The world may be getting hotter; it is also getting greener!**

Analysis of 20 years of satellite data has revealed that since 2003 global vegetation has expanded, thanks to tree planting in China, forest growth in former Soviet states and more rainfall in some areas, increasing the amount of carbon absorbed by above-ground plants to 4 billion tonnes. That's an admittedly small amount, however, compared to the 60 billion tonnes of carbon admitted into the atmosphere over the same period... *Reuters*

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