

## EDITORIAL

### **Crescendo and the Forum of the International NGOs of Catholic inspiration**

On December 11 and 12, 2017, I represented the Crescendo Worldwide Network at the Forum of International NGOs of Catholic inspiration that brought together more than 100 people representing 73 organizations in Rome. Thirty three members of the Secretariat of State and other dicasteries of the Holy See were present.

The aim of this Forum was “to make a shared assessment of these new challenges, deepen together their analysis of the interacting factors, consider anew the question of the future of our communities, safeguard those dynamics that contribute to social cohesion, and exchange essential points of advocacy and action carried out before intergovernmental bodies.

In the future, through its Secretariat the Forum will develop its role as a social observatory and offer a space for analysis, reflection and exchange of expertise so as to strengthen the Catholic voice in the public debate and in its advocacy before intergovernmental bodies specifically.” (Founding Document of the Forum).

Our network is concerned.

A few months ago, we launched an inquiry on how older people’s rights are or are not respected around the world by highlighting the following thematic groups: equality and the principle of non-discrimination, deprivation of care, violence and abuse, autonomy and independence.

Mrs Anne Bemmo describes, in the article on this page, the situation of elderly, especially women, currently in Cameroon. Its testimonies like this one are that we are expecting.

The results of these assessments will be presented to the Working Group of Aging in Geneva, which is in contact with the Independent Expert in charge of promoting the exercise by the elderly of all human rights, Mrs Rosa Kornfeld-Matte. This will be our plea in favor of the dignity of the elderly.

Dominique Lemau de Talancé

### **Death of Father Joblin**



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I was deeply saddened by the news of the passing of Father Joblin, on the first of February at the age of 97, Ecclesiastical Assistant of our global network Crescendo since its creation in 2001. For decades, he was very concerned about the place of lay organizations in the international arena, especially with supra-governmental organizations. His vision was always right, his memory prodigious and his articles of great depth. Many texts written for our global network Crescendo can be read on

[www.reseau-crescendo.org](http://www.reseau-crescendo.org).

Dominique Lemau de Talancé



Internet

POST

**THE ELDERLY IN CAMEROON**

**THEIR CONDITION OF LIFE:**

In our country the elderly live very poorly, isolated and rejected by society. They are for the most part often accused of having been sorceresses or vampires during their adult life. They are often widows or celibates without legitimate children. They sometimes live off of crumbs they find on their way to the market; often they steal from the surrounding countryside

**FAMILY TIES:**

The family ties can be cut due to the demeanor and behavior of the elderly person, face to face with members of the family or due to extremely difficult life conditions.

Most often, the elderly are not visited during the day, nor in the evening by neighbors. Their nights are extremely long for they go to bed at sundown. When they are dead, the family argues amongst themselves about the land that they might have left.

**HEALTH CARE:**

In cases of sickness, if they do not have children who are able to help, they do not have help from the society or even from their neighbors. Firewood remains a priority for them.

**SOCIAL AID:**

There is no social aid allocated to elderly people, especially to those who drag themselves on the edge of the road searching for food.

**THEIR RETIREMENT:**

Only the employed elderly people can take a retirement under the guidelines that they are workers next to the CNPS (House of retirement). They receive a pension once quarterly.

The others receive no pension

**THEIR SPIRITUALITY:**

They pray always for they have nothing to do beside of trying to survive.

The Catholics recite the Rosary that stays around their neck through the day, helping them find a moment of prayer. For the Muslims, the 6 daily prayers happen 10/15 times a day.

**WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VOLUNTEERS CLOSE TO THE ELDERLY?**

Even though it is difficult to contribute, the volunteers content themselves with aiding the elderly in all their needs:

- Medical care,
- heating water,
- visiting friends and conversation,
- sharing bread,
- home reconstruction,
- roof repairs, constructing bathrooms,
- partitioning of land, and sometimes assistance at the tribunals about abuse of trust,
- making of clothes for religious holidays, burial cloths for Christians with coffin.

**ARE THERE PROJECTS FOR MICRO-CREDIT?**

The AIC volunteers have not developed projects for these people for they are unstable in their ideas and their reasons.

**IN CONCLUSION** the elderly in our country are rejected by society and the family.

**Anne Bemmo, Post-présidente nationale Cameroun**

**■ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

**UN Economic Commission for Europe**

The Working Group on Ageing held its 10th meeting on 23 and 24th November 2017. The meeting of this inter-governmental mechanism established in 2008 to facilitate the implementation of the regional strategy for the Madrid international Plan of Action on Ageing had several goals: assessment of the third cycle of the Regional Strategy, renewal of the Working Group mandate, drafting of the synthesis report on the assessment and evaluation of the Regional Strategy.

The Working Group also analysed its 2017 main areas of activities 'results,

namely : (A) the organisation of the 4<sup>th</sup> UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Lisbon on 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 (B) the Policy Briefs with good practice examples (C) the Capacity development (D) the Monitoring implementation of MIPAA/RIS and strengthening of the evidence base for policy making (Active Ageing Index AAI), (E) the Generations and Gender Programme, (F) other projects for Eastern Europe and Central Asia on “Enhanced integration of population dynamics into development planning, follow up to the International Conference on Population and Development – ICPD in the UNECE region.

**World Health Organisation (WHO)** - On 19 June 2017 WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities welcomed Paris, France, as its 500th member. WHO began building the GNAFCC in 2010 to encourage the rethinking of environments so that they welcome everyone – especially older people. The Network has grown rapidly to include 500 cities and communities in 37 countries covering over 155 million people. In 2016, the World Health Assembly and the G7 highlighted the importance of developing age-friendly communities. The recent WHO report “Ten Years in Public Health (2007-2017) highlights the Network as one of the successes of the period.

**142nd session of the Executive Board in Geneva 22 to 27 January 2018** – The Executive Board is composed of 34 members elected for three-year terms. The main functions of the Board are to give effect to the decisions and policies at the World Health Assembly, due to meet in May 2018 to advise it and generally to facilitate its work. Mainly, the Draft 13<sup>th</sup> General Programme of Work for 2019-2023 will be discussed.

**A life-course approach to health synergy with sustainable development goals - Universal health coverage must include older people** “The Health sustainable development goal (SDG3) aims to « ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all, at all ages ». One of its core targets is to achieve universal health coverage (UHC). However, older adults require different approaches to health care and are often less able to pay for these services: therefore, health systems will need to be realigned significantly to meet these targets.”

**Seminar of the NGO Committee on Ageing** – “Basics on ageing” on January 30, 2018 from 1.00pm to 3.00pm, Room 3 at ILO (South wing). It is an informal meeting to which any interested people may participate. There will be no official speech so as to free every attendant to take the floor (representatives of Member States and INGOs, civil society, etc.)

## ■ NEWS OF THE CHURCH

On Tuesday, November 7, 2017, Pope Francis appointed Italian laywomen Gabriella Gambino and Linda Ghisoni under-secretaries of the Dicastery for the laity, family and life. They come to assist Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect, and Father Alexander Awi, Secretary, at the head of this dicastery.

In the section for life, the Pope has chosen Gabriella Gambino, 49, a specialist in ethics and the family.

In the section for the laity, the Pope has designated Linda Ghisoni, 52, a lawyer with in depth knowledge of laity.

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Gabriella Gambino

Linda Ghisoni

For this same dicastery, the Pope also appointed 3 cardinals: Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo, Archbishop of Merida (Venezuela), Jozef De Kesel, Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels (Belgium) and Jean Zerbo, Archbishop of Bamako (Mali).

## ■ NEWS OF MEMBERS

**AIC:** AIC volunteers around the world celebrated the end of the Jubilee Year on December 10 on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the founding of AIC.

AIC in the Philippines is involved in a beautiful eco-sustainable project planned over 5 years: the planting of

500 tree seedlings per hectare and the maintenance of a plot of 7 hectares on the slopes of the dikes of Mount Pinatubo. By preventing dike erosion, planted trees help save lives in the event of typhoons. They can also be a source of income through the sale of harvested fruits. These fruits are sold fresh or, in case of abundant harvest, dried and canned.

**CICIAMS** : CICIAMS received the following news from the Catholic Nurses Association of Cracow: Hanna Chrzanowska (1902-1973), a nun and a nurse, will be beatified on April 28th.

**Little Sisters of the Poor**: "Transmission of knowledge and intergenerational understanding" (according to the independent expert) are issues that are important to us and that we strive to promote in our homes. The meetings between young people and residents obviously require an investment to welcome, encourage and follow these young people, but it is worth it!

Thus, this summer, several proposals were made by the Little Sisters of NAMUR:

A week of service, during which eleven young people (5 French and 6 Belgians) spent time in "The Home St. Joseph", each putting his or her talents at the service of the residents. A holiday was organized in St. Servan for residents of the houses of the District of Paris-Brussels, who were accompanied by 3 young people from Namur.

Testimonies show that the outcome was positive: "I'm happy to have felt useful. I will not forget the life stories that some of the residents shared with me. "-" Complicity developed between everyone, it gave me the impression that we were all a big family. And let's not forget that these people have lived long before us, they have taught us so much and have given us a lot of love "... And two residents added: "We want to thank the young people who came here! Thank you for your smiles! Safe journey. "

**MIAMSI** : In collaboration with the ACI, the parishes of Thionville, brother movements as well as our Jewish, Protestant and Muslim friends: a meeting between French, Luxembourgish and Belgians on February 3, 2018 for a conference with Claire LY on the theme: "Exist in today's world"

The Social Weeks of the Catholic Church of Mali took place from 28 to 30 November 2017 and were organized by the Movement of Christian Leaders of Mali. The theme: "The Place and Role of the Christian Family in the Ongoing Reconciliation Process in the Country."

**SIGNIS** : We members of SIGNIS want to help create bonds of communion, of support, of solidarity, and of communication, bonds that give rise to hope in the midst of a world in which there is so much division, discrimination, violence and war. As the Pope has said, "While the world is battered by the winds of war and an already outmoded model of development that continues to cause human, social, and environmental degradation, Christmas invites us to remember the symbol of the Child."

**VMI** : The VMI Steering Committee met from 4 to 8 September 2017, in Katowice, in the Archdiocese of Silesia. The meeting was attended by members of the Executive Committee and representatives of the following continents: Africa, Latin America, Canada and Europe.

The main objective was to prepare for the international meeting that will take place in November 2018 in Santo Domingo on the theme: "Elder, actors of evangelization in a multigenerational and multicultural society."

After the intervention of the Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Movement, Mgr. Maupu, on the Mission of the Grandparents and that of Father Gregory Mashtaki of Tanzania on the elder and their role in evangelization, we worked in small groups to discuss the subjects for reflection at the international meeting and have developed a survey questionnaire which will be sent to all member countries of the VMI. The answers will serve as a basis for our exchanges next year.

Then the continental coordinators reported on their activities since the last steering committee and their future projects.

The participants took the opportunity to meet a group of Polish seniors and to discover the city of Krakow and the Marian shrine of Czestochowa.

## ■ AGENDA

### **Agenda for 2030 Sustainable Development Goals**

- New York, 9-18 July 2018 – The UN Department of Economic and Social Development organises a High level political Forum including a three-day Ministerial meeting. The theme will be: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. The set of goals include Goal 17, Goal 6, Goal 7, Goal 11, Goal 12, and Goal 15. Goal 11 on Cities is particularly relevant for older persons living in cities. Regional meetings on this theme will prepare the Forum
- Geneva February 28, 2018: Civil society Preparatory Meeting to UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development Goals. The members of the NGO Committee on Ageing are expected to ensure that Older persons are included in the different sustainable development goals.
- Geneva, March 1 and 2 2018 : The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Online registration System) will review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in the UNECE region. Focusing on practical value-added and peer learning, it creates a regional space to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in SDG implementation and helps identify major regional and subregional trends.

**Open-ended Working Group on Ageing** : New York July 23 to 26 2018. The UN has issued a call for written submissions to support preparation for the ninth session. Answers are to be given by April 9, 2018. The president of the Geneva NGO Committee on Ageing will attend that meeting.

### **GAROP : Global Alliance for the Rights of Older Persons** :

London, January 31st 2018 The panellists will discuss “Older people’s right to autonomy and independence” which is one of the two new focus areas to be discussed at the ninth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing in July 2018. The UN has issued a call for written submissions to support preparation for the ninth session. The president of the Geneva NGO Committee on Ageing will attend that meeting.

**Geneva NGO Committee on Ageing** : General Assembly will take place on Friday April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

## ■ CRESCENDO : WEBSITE

[www.reseau-crescendo.org](http://www.reseau-crescendo.org)

Visit it regularly!