

July 2016

## **Internship at the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations**

For two and a half weeks in June 2016, I interned at the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations (ACOUN). Throughout my internship, I had the opportunity to attend formal and informal meetings on topics such as sustainable development, UN development, women's rights, refugees' rights, religious collaboration, and peace building mechanisms. The informative meetings were led by many incredible panelists and speakers such as Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Director of UN Women. While reporting on these meetings, I helped the ACOUN prepare to receive delegates for their participation in the annual United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW61) in March. I will detail the meetings and research I participated in below.

The first meeting was the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. This meeting mainly focused on the effects of plastics and micro-plastics in the ocean, and what various countries are doing in order to decrease pollution. Delegates and Stakeholders targeted the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, which focuses on life underwater. Specifically, the meeting focused on subsection 14.1 of SDG 14, which discusses ending all types of marine pollution by 2025.

The next meeting focused on the revitalization of the UN Security Council. This meeting discussed ways to change the current structure of the Security Council, expanding the number of permanent Member States serving on the Council. This meeting also emphasized a code of conduct, urging Member States to take action when dealing with crime and major world issues.

One of my favorite parts of my internship was attending the Ecumenical Women (EW) June meeting. EW, a coalition of churches the focus on women's issues, has monthly meetings. June's meeting was primarily centered on UNCSW61 and the upcoming movements of the coalition. I learned about who EW is and what they strive to do in the upcoming 2017 calendar year. The EW discussed deadlines for statements regarding the priorities of each member organization in relation to CSW61. These priority statements will help member organizations plan for how they will address the 2017 CSW's priority theme, which is Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. The EW meeting showed me what it means to work cohesively as a group to accomplish mutual objectives.

Another meeting I attended through UN Women was the Report on Women's Involvement in Peace Processes through Partnerships with Religious and Traditional Actors. The meeting involved many panelists who focused primarily on gender, peace building and religion. Informative participants discussed the depth of discrimination against women in the world, and ways to counter violence and terrorism against women. Panelists agreed to find ways to engage communities to trigger a change in the treatment of women and girls worldwide. A topic I found interesting was the overall urgency to bring more women into politics, as statistics show that when women are involved with negotiations, peace is reached more often than not. The meeting specifically called for interventions against violence and hate among women worldwide.

Along with attending many informative meetings, I particularly enjoyed helping out at the ACOUN. During my first week, I helped gather information and statistics regarding women in the workforce, women in particular fields as well as the women's education

level for different nations around the globe. This information will be particularly useful during CSW61 in March, as the priority theme is women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. These statistics will give delegates and participants in CSW61 necessary information when discussing the priority and review themes of the Commission.

Another informative project I worked on had to do with Nestle and the controversy of the privatization of water. This research was very interesting, as I did not realize the amount of control Nestle had on the world economy. It was an informative project, as we will probably be hearing more about the issues surrounding Nestle and the privatization of water in years to come.

During the end of my internship, I attended a Humanitarian Affairs meeting with the ECOSOC focusing on reducing risk, need and vulnerability of all peoples worldwide. Delegates stressed the importance of inclusion and integrated behavior among refugees, migrants and all displaced peoples. Delegates also decided to primarily focus on women and children, and any risks associated with that demographic.

The majority of my work at the ACOUN revolved around preparing for CSW61 in March of 2017. Along with gathering statistics for the event, I worked on creating the letters to send out to the Primates and Secretaries of each major Anglican Church in the world. I also worked on creating the priorities for ACOUN, as aforementioned, from the Ecumenical Women coalition to use for CSW61. Working in the office helped me build fundamental skills I will need in life, and I enjoyed it immensely.

My time at the Anglican Communion Office and the United Nations in general was one I will never forget. I will use the lessons and information I acquired to better understand the complex world we live in. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to work with such an amazing office. I have learned so much along the way.

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