



Quaker Peace
& Social Witness

Journal letter from Geneva

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Dear Friends

I am now coming into my third month as a one-year programme assistant for QUNO Geneva and the time seems to have passed in the blink of an eye.

I share my working time across the two thematic programme areas, that of Human Impacts of Climate Change (HICC) and the second programme, Peace and Disarmament. I also provide ad hoc support to the Food & Sustainability programme where needed.

In my first month I went to Bonn to stay with Lindsey, the HICC programme manager, to become more acquainted with Bonn, where climate negotiations would soon take place. This was a good chance to see some of the institutions with which we would be working in the coming months and to learn more from Lindsey herself directly. Following Bonn, I made my way to the European Extraterritorial Obligations (ETO) Consortium in Brussels for a two-day

conference on financialisation, eco-destruction and human rights.

Financialisation is the process by which financial institutions, markets, etc., increase in size and influence. Several of the social impacts associated with unmonitored business activity and financialisation were discussed, with the most relevant to the HICC programme being the financial and business activity that directly affects our climate and ecology and the need for more substantive environmental laws in international legislation such as the law against Ecocide, championed by the Stockholm Resilience Centre. There was much to take away for the development of the economic side of the HICC programme, and for my own personal interests.

Soon after the work in Bonn and Brussels, I helped QUNO's Peace and Disarmament programme manager, Florence, organise a meeting in October on 'Peacebuilding and the UPR - how the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) can

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better support the human rights dimension of peacebuilding'. We organised for Ukrainian civil society representatives, who were to be in Geneva for the 28th Session of the UPR that month, to join the discussion and present their experiences to the delegates. This lunch was an opportunity to explore how the UPR can better support the human rights dimension of peacebuilding, in accordance with the joint General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the review of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture (PBA). These were adopted in April 2016, and emphasised the need to link peace, human rights and development to achieve sustainable peace as well as sustainable development.

Throughout September and October, I have also been working on a project in the background with Lindsey for the HICC programme called The Negotiator's Toolkit in the build up to the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Bonn this November. This booklet was created to support climate negotiators in their work to engage busy Ministries with reasons for urgent, rights-based climate action. Ministers and other decision makers face competing demands and priorities, but they may also be more receptive to one argument over another. One person may better respond to economic concerns, for example, another to scientific findings. The booklet offers eight concise summaries compiled from expert voices in climate change related sectors. It was hoped that these summaries would help negotiators engage with colleagues back home on why urgent, rights-based climate

action is critical to the long-term well-being and stability of their countries. The summaries are based on presentations given by experts at a side event in May 2017, during the climate change conference in Bonn. If of interest, the publication can be found [here](#) on the QUNO website. There is also the potential to create a 'Citizen's Toolkit' in a similar format in the near future, depending on the reception that the Negotiator's Toolkit receives.

Following the release of the Toolkit, I went straight into helping with the Peace and Disarmament programme with Florence, providing coverage and communications surrounding the QUNO events at Geneva Peace Week. QUNO hosted joint events on the role of protecting human rights to sustain peace, reconciliation in the Middle East, and the potential of land, food and water as instruments of peace in preventing conflicts in emergency situations. Once the Geneva Peace Week concluded I headed straight to Bonn for the second week of COP23 to join Lindsey in hearing the climate change negotiations from 12-17 November.

It has been a very packed and fulfilling two and a half months, with opportunities to attend many high-level events and provide meaningful input into the important QUNO programme activities. I have been developing with Lindsey the Quakers and Climate Change Worldwide [website](#) which is meant to act as a portal to a range of resources about how Quakers are leading and participating in climate action and has received many contributions already from Quakers around the world and we welcome

anyone to contribute any resources they believe would be relevant.

I have also helped in providing background research on climate change refugees to the Human Rights and Refugees programme, as well as assisting with their lunch meetings, identifying potential future funding opportunities for QUNO and providing inputs into external papers. An example of this is QUNO's draft submission to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on the stigmatisation of peace activists.

I can already see that it will be a very busy year if the last few months are anything to go by, and that I will get the opportunity to learn so much from the QUNO staff and gain a lot of knowledge from the HICC and Peace and Disarmament programmes and of course about the UN processes. I am very much looking forward to what the coming months will bring during my year in Geneva.

In peace,
Isobel Edwards