



Advocacy at the UN

By *Connie de la Vega*

Ten students participated in the University of San Francisco's Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Law Clinic during the Spring 2013 semester, representing Human Rights Advocates at the meetings of two UN human rights bodies. Four Edith Coliver Interns attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York and six Frank C. Newman Interns attended the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva, Switzerland. Two of the Edith Coliver Interns were LL.M. students - one from Venezuela and one from the Czech Republic.

The Edith Coliver Interns were supervised at the CSW session by HRA Board member Jeremiah Johnson. Patience Tusingwire, a former Edith Coliver Intern and USF LL.M. alum, also attended the CSW session and assisted the Interns there. Lani Virostko, former Frank C. Newman Intern and Interim Director of the USF Sentencing Project, attended the HRC session where she organized a panel on sentencing practices in the U.S. The panel was co-sponsored by the Swiss delegation, HRA, the ACLU, and Penalty Rights

International. She also assisted the Interns in Geneva.

On-going construction at the UN in New York continued to create access difficulties, which were exacerbated by other practices of the CSW as described below. Despite these difficulties, the CSW was able to adopt Agreed Conclusions, which it had been unable to do the year before. (See Agreed Conclusions, E/CN.6/2013/13, available at www.un.org/womenwatch/ under documents for the 57th session)

The six Frank C. Newman interns who attended the HRC were involved in a number of activities that I supervised. Four were able to make oral statements before the full HRC and many of them were involved in resolution drafting sessions as well as discussions in side events. They also met with government delegates, special mandate holders and members of other non-governmental organizations, as well as HRA's International Advisory Board member Cruz Melchor Eya Nchama.

The HRC adopted 34 resolutions and three decisions. Twenty-four passed by consensus on issues such as: right to food (Res. 22/9), anti-terrorism (Res.



Clinic delegates at the Council. Left to Right: Alen Mirza, Lani Virostko, Esther Wilch, Lana Nassar, Constance de la Vega, Cassandra Yamasaki, Kokeb Zeleke, and Graham Douds

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22/8), realization of economic, social, and cultural rights (Res. 22/5), the rehabilitation of torture victims (Res. 22/21), and right to health of children (Res. 22/32).

The U.S. was the sole country to abstain on a number of resolutions, such as the one on using education as a tool to prevent racism (Res. 22/34 adopted by vote of 46-0-1), and to dissent on others including one on the follow-up to Durban (Res. 22/30 adopted by vote of 34-1-12), the rights of people in Palestinians to self-determination (22/27 adopted by a vote of 46-1-0), and human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (22/28 adopted by a vote of 46-1-0).

There were a number of contentious resolutions including many on specific countries such as Syria (Res. 22/24 adopted by a vote of 41-1-5, Venezuela voting against), Sri Lanka (Res. 22/1 adopted by a vote of 25/13/8), holding a panel on the death penalty in March 2014 (Decision 22/117 adopted by a vote of 28-10-9, with US and Venezuela voting for), and extending the mandate of the Working Group on private military and security countries for two years (Res. 22/33, adopted by a vote of 31-11-5, US abstaining).

A few country resolutions did pass by consensus such as those on the Peoples' Republic of Korea (Res. 22/13) and Myanmar (Res. 22/14).

The HRC resolutions and decisions can be found at: <http://ohchr.org> by going to Human Rights

Bodies and then the 22d session of the HRC. The HRA written statements can be found at the same web site under Documents and all the student reports are available at the HRA website: www.humanrightsadvocates.org under Advocacy.



CSW Clinic delegates. Left to Right: Patricia Posada Rodriguez, Teresa Kokaislová, and Kendall Kozai

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 22ND SESSION, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Human Rights Implications of Private Prisons

By Lana Nassar

Years ago, I took a tour of the UN, and dreamt to myself, "One day I will rightfully be sitting here". Now, I can say dreams come true.

Months of researching and writing about private prisons came to fruition the first day I arrived at the Human Rights Council, when I gave my oral statement under the Minority Rights Agenda. This was an incredible beginning to my Geneva journey.

Private prisons are a tragic reality that most are

unfamiliar with. My goal was to educate government and NGO delegates from around the world.

Permitting a private corporation to engage in incarceration creates an economic incentive to increase the length and frequency of sentences in order to maximize profits. When a multi-billion dollar industry runs a prison, the prisoners suffer. They suffer from dismal conditions, scarce security protections, and basic living needs. Unlike governments, private prisons are founded on a business model that profits from incarceration and is responsible to its shareholders, not the public, and therefore has less accountability for the treatment of prisoners.

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

states that arbitrariness may include detention authorized by domestic law, including sentences that are disproportionately long or harsh (Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to development, Human Rights Council, United Nations General Assembly, 61, A/HRC/22/44, 24 December 2012).

The recent trend worldwide toward prison privatization has disproportionately impacted immigrants. Private prisons have been increasingly used as immigrant detention centers in many countries. The privatization of immigration detention centers in the United States serves as a “seedbed” for prison privatization, and private firms are careful to initially choose immigration detention centers and other low-security facilities in the “less visible regions of the adult and juvenile penal systems before expanding into the high-security adult facilities”(Flynn, Michael and Cannon Cecilia, Privatization of Immigrant Detention: Towards a Global View, A Global Detention Project Working Paper, 2009,15, http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/fileadmin/docs/GDP_PrivatizationPaper_Final5.pdf).

Private companies often uphold or improve their services only when confronted with elevated degrees of surveillance and oversight, especially by international organizations or other supra-national bodies.¹ This is precisely why our job is so vital. Once light is shed upon the tragic reality of private prisons, there can and will be change.

My work in Geneva, advocating to change the human rights situation related to abuses in private prisons, inspired me to continue on the path of human rights. This trip was a prominent moment in my law school career and reconfirmed exactly what I want to do. People keep telling me that this was a once in a lifetime experience, but I know I will be back soon enough, continuing the fight for justice.

A copy of my report is available at: <http://www.humanrightsadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Human-Rights-Implications-of-Private-Prisons.pdf>.

My written statement to the HRC is available at: Human Rights Implications of Private Prisons A/HRC/22/NGO/39.

1. Sweden is now considered to be a model country for immigration detention. In response to human rights violations in the centers, the government introduced momentous reforms in immigration policy.

The Death Row Phenomenon: The Need to Call for Moratoriums on Sentencing

By Kokeb Zeleke

As a Frank C. Newman intern, I had the opportunity to advocate against the death row phenomenon at the 22nd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The death row phenomenon occurs when people are sentenced to death and spend extremely long periods of time on death row. The permanent stress, the constant fear and the usually inhumane conditions inmates are subjected to lead to extreme physical, psychological and emotional harm, amounting to what has been considered cruel and inhuman treatment or punishment. On behalf of Human Rights Advocates, I submitted a written statement to the Council titled, “The death row phenomena as torture: The need for moratoriums on death penalty sentences.” (See document: A/HRC/22/NGO/52).

Part of my argument was to build on the fact that there are no humane methods of executions, thus prompting the General Assembly to call for a moratorium on executions. We propose moratoriums on both executions *and* sentencing and executions, otherwise inmates will continue to be subjected to the death row phenomenon.

When I attended the Council session, the death penalty was a hot topic, and in collaboration with my colleague Esther Wilch, fellow FCN Intern, I presented a combined statement on extreme sentencing practices around the world and on the death row phenomenon.

I focused on two draft resolutions. The first was the “Panel on the human rights of children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed”, introduced by the permanent missions of Belgium, Norway and Montenegro, brought attention to the negative impact of the imposition and carrying out of the death penalty on the human rights of children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed. We introduced the language “within a reasonable period of time” in regards to information about inmates being provided to the family members. Unfortunately the language was not accepted, and the initial draft went through very significant changes that weakened the resolution before passing by consensus. (See resolution: A/HRC/RES/22/11)

The second drafting session concerned a resolution on the “High-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty,” organized by Costa Rica, France and other countries. Unfortunately, NGOs were

not allowed to participate, but it provided a platform to meet with delegates to provide them with further information the issue. This resolution also went through significant changes before being adopted by a vote, but calls for a panel discussion on the death penalty in March 2014. (See resolution: A/HRC/DEC/22/117)

I accompanied Professor de la Vega, to Baden, Switzerland, where we met with various lawyers and NGO representatives regarding a death row inmate in San Quentin. I spoke about the death row phenomenon, the current legal obstacles we were facing and the solutions we were proposing. I also shared recent events that took place at the Human Rights Council.

Being a part of the International Human Rights Clinic was very valuable for me. I must admit, I initially questioned the legitimacy of international institutions and their ability to bring about tangible, sustainable and positive change. Acknowledging the realities of politics, and how in many instances they directly collide with the interests of human rights, I was a little skeptical, perhaps jaded, entering this internship. And perhaps I did not resolve the internal dilemma I had, and not all of my questions were answered.

But I learned this. We were part of the discourse. We contributed to a dialogue and we spoke for the people affected by the issues, having well researched the issues. We educated delegates about the violations occurring in their own countries and advocated with others to develop better solutions. We helped develop the legal framework relevant to the US and the world.

As a second year law student, I can confidently say that being part of the International Human Rights Clinic was one of my most valuable educational experiences so far. I would like to sincerely thank Professor de la Vega, Human Rights Advocates, Frank C. Newman and his legacy, as well as University of San Francisco School of Law for presenting me with such an opportunity.

Child Malnutrition: A Crisis Without Borders

By Cassandra Yamasaki

This past semester, I had the pleasure of being one of six students who participated in the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council. Having represented Human Rights Advocates (HRA) at the 56th session of the Commission of the Status of Women last year, I was no stranger to the commitment and perseverance it takes to be an

effective advocate. I was also keenly aware that every new opportunity breeds its own set of challenges and unexpected obstacles, and so I understood that achieving my advocacy goals this year at the Council hinged on my ability to be patient, persistent, and most importantly, flexible in the framing of my chosen topic and my lobbying effort.

Noting that the Council had dedicated an entire day-long session to the right of the child to the highest attainable standards of health, I focused my research on the subject of child malnutrition. Although most of the work in this area has focused on combating child undernutrition, including acute malnutrition (defined by a deficit in caloric intake) and chronic malnutrition (defined by inadequate nutritional variation), I wanted to expand the scope of my project to also cover the issue of *overnutrition* (observed as either overweight, obesity or an excess of added sugars and saturated fats in the diet). This facet of child malnutrition is particularly alarming not only because it affects 155 million children worldwide, but also because it creates a double burden on states that cannot afford the costs associated with high prevalence of both under- and overnutrition. As well, given the persistent challenges to nutritional security, such as poverty, conflict and political instability, and natural disasters, developing a comprehensive strategy for eradicating child malnutrition requires an evaluation and understanding of the problem in all of its manifestations.

Following the submission of my written statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council (see, A/HRC/22/NGO/38) and a longer report to HRA (<http://humanrightadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05-Child-Malnutrition-A-Crisis-Without-Borders.pdf>), I knew that I had my work cut out for me. Not surprisingly, most of the discussions on child malnutrition at the Council centered exclusively on food security, rather than nutritional adequacy. This was especially true at the early drafting sessions for the Resolution on Child Health and in the text of the resolution itself. However, I used this as a poignant starting point for my lobbying efforts. I engaged in conversations with the most influential delegations at the drafting sessions, raising awareness on the impacts of child overnutrition in their own countries, and urging them to support inclusion of the term “overnutrition” in the resolution. While many delegations were receptive to my proposal, Uruguay – the delegation leading the resolution – was the most helpful in expanding my advocacy efforts. As a result of several successful discussions with Uruguay, my proposal for incorporating overnutrition was provided to all of Uruguay’s EU colleagues.

Unfortunately, the term “overnutrition” did not

appear in the final draft of the Resolution on Child Health, but several concepts relating to overnutrition did, including “non-communicable diseases”, “physical inactivity”, “unhealthy diet”, and a recommendation for mitigating the adverse impact of business marketing practices on children (See, Resolution A/HRC/RES/22/32.) Although these feats may be small in the broader context of the resolution, I recognize that the advances I made as a human rights advocate during my time at the Council certainly were not. As a two-time veteran of the Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Clinic, I have learned that one of the greatest challenges for any advocate is raising awareness about the impact and importance of a marginalized or largely untouched issue. I am proud to say that my and therefore HRA’s advocacy efforts at the Council were successful. I am forever grateful to Professor de la Vega, HRA, and the USF community for affording me the opportunity to partake in such a meaningful and empowering experience.

Extreme Criminal Sentences: Violation of International Standards

By Esther Wilch

My goal in attending the Human Rights Council in Geneva was to raise awareness about extreme sentencing practices, specifically those related to juvenile offenders, and especially in regards to the United States. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights mandates that sentences must rehabilitate prisoners and cannot serve a merely retributive purpose. In light of this standard, sentencing structures such as life without parole and de facto life without parole are inherently suspect, since they remove any opportunity for reeducation or rehabilitation at the moment of sentencing. As a member of the Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Clinic, I submitted a written statement detailing my project. (The statement is available at <http://www.humanrightsadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Extreme-Criminal-Sentences-Violations-of-International-Standards.pdf> and as UN document number A/HRC/22/NGO/53).

I attended the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council, which was greatly focused on the abolition of the death penalty. While this is certainly an important and critical issue, the possibility of a moratorium on death sentences reiterates the significance of analyzing

other extreme sentencing practices. As fewer people are sentenced to death, the number of those who are sentenced to life without parole will increase and it is unclear that the latter is any more humane than the former.

A convict sentenced to life has the opportunity to have his or her sentence reduced if mitigating circumstances present themselves, such as evidence of rehabilitation. A life without the possibility of parole sentence, however, means that at the moment of sentencing the convict loses all possibility of release. Beyond these sentences are de facto sentences that function equivalent to life without parole without being labeled as such; the fallout of such sentencing schemes is that offenders may serve de facto life without parole sentences for what amounts to a single transaction or non-violent crime.

Recent US Supreme Court decisions reiterate that international pressure can have an effect on domestic law in the United States. In *Roper v. Simmons*, a 2005 Supreme Court Case that outlawed the death penalty for juveniles in the United States, the Court cited the international opposition to juvenile death penalty. 543 U.S. 551, 570 (2005). Later, in *Graham v. Florida*, the Supreme Court noted that the international consensus against juvenile life without parole for non-homicide crimes was relevant to determining that such practices were unconstitutional. 130 S.Ct. 2011, 2034 (2010).

The United States Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was last year. Since the UPR is a long-term process, my goal at the UN was to raise the interest and awareness of key countries about the US’s extreme sentencing of juveniles and adults. The ultimate hope is that these countries will address such issues during the United States UPR and that, ultimately, this attention will convince the United States, and others, to adopt more humane laws and practices. One of the main avenues for getting this information across was through a side event, a thematic discussion of a number of issues spearheaded by Human Rights Advocates.

My efforts at the UN were focused on raising awareness of the delegates present. I spent my first day in the plenary feeling like my task was insurmountable; every individual represented a country and I knew, from my research, that each of these countries had very different, firm and often problematic views when it came to extreme sentencing. By the second day, however, I had begun to realize that the UN wasn’t some well-coded machine for which I didn’t have the password; it consisted of people interacting with one another, it would take relationship building. I became more assertive in my interactions with delegates. I stopped approaching them as their nation and began talking to them as individuals.

The most valuable skill I gained through the Frank C. Newman Clinic and my visit to the Human Rights Council was this: in everything we do as attorneys or advocates we will always be dealing with individuals, and most often, those individuals will be representing a bigger cause or interest. The best thing we can do is to be informed about that greater concern while remaining sensitive to the individuals we are addressing. I had been warned that delegates can be abrupt, disinterested and even rude. My overwhelming experience was that when you approached delegates from an angle that they could relate to, they were eager to help or at the very least, learn about it.

I can't describe my experience in anything but the most superlative terms. It was the best thing I have done in law school; it reaffirmed my belief in an effort towards international recognition of human rights, however long or drawn out that may be, and it reminded me of why I chose USF.

The Right to Political Participation: Minorities, Conflict and the Need for Special Measures

By Alen Mirza

I focused on the right to political participation at the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council. I looked at the right to political participation in the context of minorities living in post-conflict situations. In my report, I argued how post-conflict situations create de facto barriers that prevent minorities from effectively exercising their right to vote and take part in government (A/HRC/22/NGO/54). As a result, I maintained that special measures (also known as affirmative obligations or affirmative action), are necessary to help ensure that minorities effectively and equally participate at all levels of their state's decision-making processes. Since special measures are commonly used in the context of either higher education or with respect to employment, I came to realize that advocating for the use of special measures in the context of minority political participation was a newer topic. Nevertheless, since international law holds that affirmative measures are necessary, wherever there exists discrimination in fact, it serves as an important tool to address the challenges minorities face when attempting to take part in public life in post-conflict scenarios (CERD/C/GC/32).

The majority of my focus at the Human Rights Council was in the informal drafting session on the resolution on the rights of minorities. During our two weeks in Geneva, I participated in three separate drafting sessions, including the initial session in which the first draft resolution was presented to delegates (A/HRC/22/L.7). Even though the drafting session was open to NGO participation, Human Rights Advocates was the only organization present. After sitting in the drafting session and listening to delegates debate resolution language, I drafted a one-page document with my recommendations to be incorporated in the resolution. The one-page document proposed three amendments:

- (1) First, make reference to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in the preambular paragraphs. I found this to be important since CERD contains the strongest language concerning special measures in the context of racial discrimination and is one of the most widely ratified human rights treaties.
- (2) Second, strengthen existing references to special measures and full, effective and equal enjoyment of the right to political participation. There was reference to the right of minorities to participate in public life, but the language used was much weaker than in comparison to the paragraphs delineating the rights of minorities to education and the rights of minority women.
- (3) Third, include already agreed upon language borrowed from previous resolutions highlighting the disproportionate human rights violations minorities face from situations of conflict.

In subsequent drafting sessions, I presented my report and one-page recommendations to delegates participating in the informal drafting session including the Austrian delegate who served as the chair. I was surprised to witness many of the delegates seeking to weaken the language in the initial draft, rather than strengthen it, even occasionally regressing on prior human rights commitments. Underlying issues like the Durban Declaration, which dealt generally with combating racism but addressed several controversial issues that many western states did not want to associate with dominated the discourse. This experience shed light on the role NGOs play at the Council. Not only are we there to raise awareness about our cause and push for language to advance human rights, but we also play a vital role in making sure that states respect and recognize already existing human rights obligations.

During the second consultation, I made

an intervention where I gave an overview of my recommendations to the delegations in attendance. Afterwards, I worked with Professor de la Vega to approach delegates individually in hopes of getting their support. My recommendations relating to language affirming the right of minorities to full, effective and equal participation were incorporated in the third draft. And in later drafting sessions, my recommendations not incorporated in the draft were advocated for by the delegates from South Africa, Slovenia and Canada I had spoken with before. (Resolution A/HRC/RES/22/4).

Participation at the Council helped me put a face to the human rights mechanisms entrusted to advance international human rights law. Having the skillset of a lawyer was incredibly beneficial in framing the issues, researching the facts and providing substantive forward-looking recommendations.

I learned that advocacy is more than just crafting the best argument on paper, but engaging with key players on a personal level to explain why our issues need addressing and to provide insight on these issues that can affect the development of such human rights in the future. The University of San Francisco School of Law Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Clinic reaffirmed my decision to go to law school in general, and USF in particular. The program shed light on non-traditional career opportunities that my colleagues and I look to fulfill after graduation. For me, the Clinic effectuates the law school's social justice mission and global perspective. It stands as a testament to the unique character of the Law School and the University.

Human Rights and the Environment: Implications of Hazardous Waste Disposal on Established International Human Rights

By Graham D. Douds

I feel honored to have been a part of this truly enlightening experience of preparing for and participating in the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The most impressionable part for me was being in a room which included a representative from nearly every country agreeing to discuss human rights. It was an electric environment to be exposed to at such an early

point in my legal career.

The reason for being there was even more inspiring. My topic was a variation of something I have pursued for the entirety of my short career: Human Rights and the Environment.

Unfortunately, at this session there was no resolution to be drafted and adopted, so most of my interactions and lobbying efforts saw little immediate fruition on this topic. Most of my efforts were aimed to educate delegates unfamiliar with the nuances of my topic and the important connection between the environment and human rights.

At the 22nd Session, however, pursuant to Resolution 19/10 adopted in March 2012, the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment made his first report. He also attended a side event hosted by the Costa Rican delegate to expand on his mandate. From reading and listening to his report and attending the side event, I extrapolated that the scope of his mandate includes to:

- (1) study and determine the scope of the international human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy sustainable environment;
- (2) study and determine best practices in upholding and strengthening those international human rights obligations relating to the environment; and
- (3) make annual reports of his findings and include recommendations in those reports on how to implement best practices.

My work focused on only one aspect of human rights and the environment, namely the hazardous waste trade and its implications on human rights and the environment. I wrote a 15-page report as well as shorter reports for distribution. In my report (Human Rights and the environment: A preliminary assessment of the need for adequate regulation of private actors; UN Doc: A/HRC/22/NGO/37), I made two recommendations that I believe are crucial in effectively thwarting the negative human rights impacts causing hazardous waste disposal: (A) greater emphasis must be placed on imposing binding enforcement mechanisms on corporations causing environmental degradation leading to human rights violations, and (B) in an effort to adopt a robust and holistic approach to effectively protect environment-related human rights, more focus should be placed on pollution and waste prevention.

Although aspects of the transboundary and national movements of hazardous waste coincide with

the Independent Expert's mandate due to inherent implications of the hazardous waste trade on the environment, the hazardous waste trade is not fully encompassed by environment-related human rights obligations. The 19/10 mandate takes a focused approach limited to human rights obligations indirectly (but no less severely) affected by environmental calamities. Alternatively, the hazardous waste trade often directly impacts human rights without necessarily impacting the environment. One example of this is when electronic goods are exported to countries where children are dismantling them by hand. Although not necessarily an environmental problem, the exposure of chemicals and hazardous waste pose a significant threat to their health and developmental physiology—violating various established international human rights treaties. Nonetheless, because the 18/11 mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes was not on the agenda at this session, my focus was to address only the environmental-related impacts of hazardous waste trade.

For me, the highlight of the trip was attending an off-site event hosted by FES, Earth Justice and the Center for International Environmental Law, and attended by the Independent Expert and a handful of NGO representatives. Over tea, coffee and cookies our panel discussion outlined the current status of human rights and the environment in the various regions of the world. The Independent Expert then entertained questions and opened the conversation to allow the NGOs to voice their questions and concerns. I was impressed with the Independent Expert's depth and breadth of knowledge as well with his candid responses.

Throughout my time as a Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Law Clinic Intern, I gained a wealth of knowledge and experience. In addition, I also gained inspiration and momentum for my career. I believe environmental degradation poses the most significant threat to human rights. I have determined that making marked change in the field of sustainable development is a lifetime career goal for me.

Near the end of our trip, at the last dinner together in Geneva, my colleagues as well as Professor de la Vega and the Clinic's Fellow, Lani Virostko, each described the highlights of our experiences. For me, not only did this trip solidify my decision to make change in environmental policy and sustainable development, but also I feel it was the largest affirmative step I have made in attaining this lifetime goal. For this, I am forever grateful.

Human Rights Advocates Co-Sponsors Side Event on Extreme Sentencing at Human Rights Council

By Lani Virostko

In our continuing efforts to raise awareness about extreme criminal sentencing, Human Rights Advocates organized a side event at the 22nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to address mass incarceration, solitary confinement, and the death penalty. The panel was co-sponsored by the ACLU, Penal Reform International and the Swiss Mission to the UN, and included panelists Juan Mendez, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Professor Connie de la Vega from Human Rights Advocates, Jaqueline Macalesher from Penal Reform International, Vivian Calderoni from the Brazilian NGO Conectas, and Jamil Dakwar from the ACLU.

The distinguished panel examined the global human rights implications of extreme criminal sentencing, private prisons, and mass incarceration in the U.S., solitary confinement and the death penalty, the use of these punishments in the U.S. and Brazil, and the death row phenomenon. The speakers put these practices in the context of accepted and evolving international human rights standards and provided recommendations for the future to ensure that all incarcerated persons are treated with dignity and respect under the law.

Mr. Mendez strongly condemned both the death penalty and solitary confinement, stating that both often violate the prohibition on torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. He called for the absolute prohibition of the death penalty and solitary confinement on juveniles and persons with mental disabilities, recommended the implementation of alternative disciplinary sanctions, and called for the universal prohibition of solitary confinement exceeding 15 days. Mr. Mendez concluded that although there is a global movement toward ending the death penalty, the death penalty is still utilized and must eventually be completely abolished.

Professor de la Vega discussed issues related to extreme criminal sentencing in the United States and examined the implications of prison privatization on sentencing practices. The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, accounting for five percent of the world's overall population but 25 percent of

its prison population. One of the major contributing factors to over incarceration, Professor de la Vega explained, is the use in the U.S. of excessively long sentences, including life without parole (LWOP) and de facto life without parole sentences. By virtue of consecutive sentences, recidivist statutes and mandatory minimums individuals are serving de facto LWOP sentences. Extremely long sentences such as these fail to provide prisoners with meaningful review or any real chance of rehabilitation and contravene the ICCPR and other international law. These already problematic practices are exacerbated by the increasing role of private prisons, which create an economic incentive for extreme sentences. Professor de la Vega concluded by recommending that the Human Rights Council review the validity of LWOP and other extreme sentencing schemes, explore ways to shorten sentences and address the issue of private prisons.

Ms. Macalesher discussed the death row phenomenon and described how the harm caused by death sentences is not limited to the execution itself. The time spent waiting on death row also amounts to torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. She highlighted the many human rights implicated by the death penalty worldwide.

Vivian Calderoni discussed solitary confinement in Brazil. She explained that in 2003 Brazil established the Special Disciplinary System (RDD) which allows for isolation for up to 360 days and limits

contact with the outside world to two two-hour visits a week and 2 hours outside a day, also in isolation. Ms. Calderoni explained that there is a lack of reliable data about the conditions of the system or the number of those affected and that the issue has not been the subject of public debate. She concluded by stating that RDD violates human rights standards of human dignity, due process and constitutes a form of torture and ill treatment.

Finally, Mr. Dakwar discussed the serious human rights abuses occurring in the U.S. due to the explosion of the use of solitary confinement. It is estimated that over 80,000 individuals are currently held in substantial isolation across the country for days, weeks, months or even years at a time. This includes children, vulnerable LGBTI prisoners, immigrants, and mentally ill individuals. Mr. Dakwar stressed that international engagement is critical in holding the United States accountable to its human rights obligations.

The panel garnered questions and comments from the attendees and sparked interest among delegates about issues related to extreme criminal sentencing. HRA received positive feedback about the content of the panel and the expertise of the panelists. The event successfully spread awareness of the serious human rights implications of extreme criminal sentencing. Hopefully this awareness will lead to changes in the penal system of the United States and worldwide.

UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 57TH SESSION, NEW YORK

Creative Human Rights Advocacy at the CSW to Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

By Natalie Jones

It was my privilege to attend the 57th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women and to advocate for increasing access to protection orders and women's shelters for survivors of intimate partner violence.

I entered the CSW sessions with the knowledge

that violence against women and girls is universal and devastating. No continent, country or culture goes untouched. At least one in three women will be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in the course of her lifetime. I knew that the most common form of violence experienced by women globally is physical violence inflicted by an intimate partner.

I learned in the opening session that this was the largest meeting ever to focus on the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls. I also learned that the CSW had been clandestinely meeting for a week prior to Human Rights Advocate's arrival and the official first day of sessions.

During the opening session, I was encouraged to

hear member state after member state extoll the virtues of protection orders and women's shelters. However, I still had my work cut out for me. Unlike my Frank C. Newman colleagues, the Edith Coliver Interns were faced with specific challenges.

Member state delegates were segregated from NGO representatives. Human Rights Advocates and other NGOs were categorically turned away from general discussions throughout the two week-session. It was even rare for us to encounter a delegate in the hallways of UN building. However, these roadblocks did not discourage me, it made me specifically target my advocacy and get a little creative.

For example, the United States delegation hosted a side event at its Permanent Mission and I wanted access to its members. Initially, the side-event administrator and the guards posted outside the Permanent Mission turned me away; however, through persistence I was invited in. While in attendance I presented Human Rights Advocate's recommendations to the US Violence Against Women Act Administrator, who oversees a \$400 million budget.

I asked her why the US funds shelters that turn away intimate partner violence survivors that desire to flee with their teenage sons. The Violence Against Women Act Administrator avoided answering my question. However, I was proud to bring to light this practice, informing UN officials and chairpersons in attendance that boys sometimes as young as twelve years old are being turned away from federally-funded shelters.

I also presented my recommendations to the CEDAW working group. Interventions were not on the agenda that day, but I created an opportunity to present. After my presentation I approached the Chairperson and we discussed my recommendations and supporting research for nearly 40 minutes. At the end of the interaction I was asked to contribute to their upcoming report. Hopefully, my recommendations will be appearing in the forthcoming CEDAW best legal practices report.

Because of the experiences I discussed above, as well as experiences untold, I am so grateful for the opportunity to advocate for Human Rights Advocates' comprehensive and compassionate agenda. I encourage anyone that can to support Human Rights Advocates in any way possible.

Addressing School-Related Gender-Based Violence at the CSW

By Kendall Kozai

School-related gender-based violence, particularly violence against girls in schools, is a pervasive, yet largely invisible problem around the world. School-related gender-based violence refers to acts of sexual, physical, or psychological violence inflicted on children in and around schools because of stereotypes or norms attributed to their sex or gendered identity. It is estimated that at least 246 million boys and girls suffer from school-related gender-based violence every year. Girls in particular are vulnerable to sexual harassment, rape, coercion, exploitation, and discrimination from teachers, staff, and peers.

Root-causes of such violence include social, cultural, and religious norms, reduced economic opportunities, discrimination and social marginalization, and most importantly, missing legal safeguards and weak institutional capacity at international and national levels. This largely stems from lack of credible data and statistics on instances of gender-based violence in schools, due to states' reluctance to investigate violence, as well as victims' fears associated with reporting such violence. This type of violence has detrimental and cyclical effects on the realization of girls' right to education and to learn in a safe school environment since violence against girls not only presents a barrier to education, but lack of education promotes violence against girls.

Going into the project and even during the first couple days in New York at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), I did not think that my topic would be particularly contentious. Leading up to the session, there were numerous statements, reports, and resolutions recognizing the importance of girls' right to education and the impact violence has on the full realization of such a right, especially in light of what happened in Pakistan in October 2010 when Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl, was shot by the Taliban on her way to school. I expected that school-related gender-based would be sensitive in that states may be unwilling to take proactive measures to address the issue; however, it never even crossed my mind that there would be disagreement on seemingly fundamental and basic issues.

Some states, the Holy See in particular, refused to recognize the existence of "gender-based violence."

Others advocated for eliminating the word “gender” and the phrase “violence against girls” from the text of the Agreed Conclusions entirely. Other states, led by the African Group, wanted to include sovereignty language that would excuse states from implementing the Agreed Conclusions if the recommendations were inconsistent with national laws and development priorities. This provision alone would have completely undermined the Agreed Conclusions, the work of all participants at the CSW, and the efforts of human rights defenders committed to combating violence against women and girls around the world. Thankfully, after intense negotiations and some late-night deals, this provision was not adopted.

At the CSW, I quickly learned that as a non-governmental organization (NGO), I would not have much access to influencing the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the Agreed Conclusions. However, this was a blessing in disguise because the most valuable lesson I learned at the CSW was how to be creative and strategic in trying to make a difference at the United Nations. After being cut at the last minute from the list of slated NGOs to speak at one of the panels on violence against women, after learning that we would not be able to even observe the negotiations of the Agreed Conclusions, and after realizing the impossibility of even distinguishing delegates from non-delegates, I realized I needed to find another way to insert myself in the conversation. As soon to be scrappy human rights lawyers, each of us—Natalie, Patricia, Teresa, and I—took a different approach in trying to lobby delegates and be advocates for our respective topics. Instead of approaching delegates themselves at the larger panels, I attended side events and regional caucus meetings as a means to access the decision and policy makers and influence these discussions.

Various NGO and civil society members met in Regional Caucus groups to join forces and develop a common platform to advocate for proposed language to be included in the text of the Agreed Conclusions. By attending the North America/Western Europe Regional Caucus meetings, I was able to get copies of working drafts of the Agreed Conclusions that were circulating between delegations and UN staff members, as well as hear insights and updates as to what was being discussed behind closed doors—particularly the specific countries that were causing problems or those countries trying to move the conversation forward. In the end, language addressing girls’ right to education and violence against girls in schools was included in the final draft of the Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2013/13, Sec. B, paras.

Cc and ll). This was a small, but meaningful victory.

Though the lack of transparency and accessibility at the CSW was frustrating at times, I am extremely thankful and appreciative for the opportunity to participate in the clinic and as a representative of Human Rights Advocates at the UN. The experience has only fueled my commitment to advocate for women’s rights and a more efficient, accessible, and transparent UN.

For more information, please see, “Establishing an Effective Framework to Address School-Related Gender-Based Violence,” (<http://www.humanrightsadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Establishing-an-Effective-Framework-to-Address-School-Related-Gender-Based-Violence.pdf>).

Addressing Gender Discrimination and Violence against Women and girls – The Responsibility of States for Fulfilling the Right to Education

By Patricia Posada Rodriguez

This March I had the honor to attend and participate in the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The trip was a turning point in my career as it afforded me the opportunity of seeing a broader picture of gender activism and its impact on the ground. The main thing I took from the whole trip, besides gaining a glimpse into the universal suffering of women across the world, was the work being done by civil society to influence change at policy level as well as those individual perceptions on gender and equality. The 57th session of the CSW took place at UN Headquarters in New York with representatives from member states, UN entities, and NGOs from all regions of the world in attendance.

Before the session began, I had no inkling of what my experience would be. Upon arrival in New York, it soon became apparent to me that I was surrounded by other dynamic women whose experiences spanned a wide range of areas including women’s rights, human rights, community organizing, public health access, and training, among others. On the first day, as I walked

from one session to another, I equated my experience to that of a child in a candy store because of all the opportunities available to learn about violence against women. Except, there was nothing “sweet” or trivial about the topics that exposed the unimaginable violence that women face and the structures of violence and power that continue to perpetuate injustice and violence against women and girls everyday all around the world.

After two weeks of attending side events organized by NGOs, it became very clear that women have become tired of rhetoric. Enough is enough, women are demanding action.

The recurring message from the sessions I attended was the courage of women activists who braved the repercussions of taking the road less traveled in order to speak up against gender-based violence and injustice. I was impacted by the stories of women who have experienced violence and who continue to fight back to ensure that nobody violates their minds, bodies, and souls again, and that women and girls are free from fear, violence, and injustice. It is from these women that I learned the courage involved action against the very perpetrators; sharing their stories of personal encounters; advocacy and activism even in areas where the structures of violence punish those who speak up; and the courage to create alliances with male activists who understand that women’s rights are also human rights.

My report addressed how violence and discrimination against women in the area of education hinder their ability to accomplish their educational goals established in several human rights instruments. Violence in school has a high impact on girls’ education, and indirect impact on their enjoyment of other human rights. The percentage of girls that drop out of school and have learning difficulties is significantly higher among victims of violence, thus is a serious obstacle to gender equality and empowerment of future generations of women (see <http://humanrightsadvocates.org>).

Violence against women involves a complex series of interrelated issues. Violence occurs because of power differences between men and women, subordination of women, a culture of impunity, poverty, alcoholism, drugs, exposure to violence, and many other factors. It is a crime whatever the reason, and cannot be excused due to culture or religion.

I left New York knowing that my work at the CSW was worth it. The Agreed Conclusions included

significant protection for women’s right to education and accountability for perpetrators. I am convinced that women’s right to education is more protected now and that women and girls are closer to a life without violence. As a woman from a developing country, to be able participate in the 57th session of the CSW was an extraordinary experience and a significant achievement in my developing career.

The CSW had a song this year, a song that calls for change and celebrates acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who make extraordinary contributions to their countries and communities on a daily basis. The song inspires solidarity and the need for a continued commitment from men and women across the globe to continue the fight for women’s equality and ending violence against women.

Participation of NGOs at the Commission on the Status of Women

By Teresa Kokaislová

This past March, I had the honor to participate at the 57th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women as a delegate of Human Rights Advocates and as an Edith Coliver Intern of the Human Rights Clinic. While my colleagues focused on substantive issues regarding women’s rights, I worked on procedural issues. My task was to discover the real rationale behind restricting the cooperation between civil society and the CSW.

The CSW platform used to be a place for NGOs to thrive and to freely present their work and render support to the Commission. Although the work of NGOs has proved to be a vital element of the discussions and work at CSW, at the last two sessions, NGOs were not even allowed to observe the decision-making processes. Consultations on Agreed Conclusions were held as closed meetings and, at the 56th CSW session (2012), no Agreed Conclusions were adopted.

While talking to governmental delegates and representatives of other NGOs, I realized that the issue was even more sensitive and serious than I expected. Therefore, I had to act in a very discreet way and present my views carefully. Fortunately, I had the chance to speak

to several delegates who supported and cared greatly for cooperation with the civil society and provided me with invaluable information.

I found out that the member states meet before each session and vote on the participation of NGOs in the deliberation on Agreed Conclusions. Although there are many states supporting the idea of closer cooperation, the counterforce coming from certain regional groups is too strong.

The involvement of NGOs in governmental work is based on the ideas of open governance and transparency of governmental actions facilitating the development and strengthening of democracy. As a political philosophy, the open governance principle advocates the participation of interested citizens in the democratic process in order to enable them to influence the creation of policies. Most national governments and legislative bodies honoring democracy have opened their procedures to the participation and observation of their citizens that bring the touch of reality and give the representatives a sense of needs and interests of the people. NGOs often represent those citizens that can influence these processes only with major difficulties. Therefore, they should be allowed to take their place and speak for them where needed.

Most delegates and representatives I

approached were surprised to find out that the legal basis for participation of NGOs does allow for more intensive cooperation. In fact, it is identical to the one at the Human Rights Council. However, the CSW has developed exceedingly restrictive practices. The exclusion of NGOs raises a question whether the lack of transparency and accountability in the CSW procedures leads to the complication of the negotiations and weakens their efficiency.

After my return from New York, we decided to follow up my findings and to approach the Bureau of CSW directly. We sent out a letter addressing the main issues and requesting action. Moreover, Human Rights Advocates has joined the initiative of several European NGOs to work on the restructuring of CSW.

Since there is no official channel for NGOs to speak up and raise the issue at the CSW directly, it is necessary to find a different, more discreet way to fight for the principles of democracy and transparency to be reintroduced into the CSW work. Whether talking to the governmental representatives in the corridors or communicating with the Secretariat of the CSW in an unofficial manner – it is essential that we raise our voice and let them know that honoring these principles will take our efforts even further. Disregarding them will mean a step back.

HRA Attends First Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

By Kimberly Irish

In early December 2012, I travelled to snowy Geneva to represent Human Rights Advocates at the first annual United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights (Forum). This precedent-setting Forum was attended by approximately 1,000 people, including representatives from over 80 countries around the world. The Forum focused on the trends and challenges to implement the Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights for implementation of the “Protect, Respect and Remedy” framework. Former Special-Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, John Ruggie, chaired the Forum.

HRA has long advocated for developing legally-binding standards that would address the obligations of corporate actors in protecting human rights. For many years, we have closely monitored and participated in the development of the field of business and human rights, including the creation of the Guiding Principles. The climate of the Forum was hopeful, as global business leaders, human rights professionals, NGO and civil society participants, and government representatives gathered together in Geneva.

The keynote statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, emphasized that effective implementation of the third pillar of the Guiding Principles – access to a remedy for human rights violations by corporations – will be essential for success. She also welcomed people from communities affected by human rights violations committed by corporations, noting that it was extremely important to hear their voices. Another memorable keynote state-

ment was by Ms. Debbie Stothard, the Deputy Secretary-General of FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) and Coordinator of ALTSEAN-Burma. Ms. Stothard provided examples of individuals who have been killed or jailed trying to stop human rights abuses linked to business activities, and she noted that no one has been convicted. Long applause and standing ovations followed her remarks.

Throughout the Forum, the most impactful statements came from affected individuals. For example, in a session titled “Taking Stock – 1 ½ Years After the Endorsement of the Guiding Principles – Pillar III - Access to Judicial Remedy,” Rosa Amaro (an affected stakeholder from the La Oroya case in Peru) provided startling information about the high levels of lead in the blood of newborns in the community that is linked to the pollution caused by Doe Run, a metals mining and lead producing company. Ms. Amaro urged the UN to turn its eyes to her community. She advocated for Peru to provide specialized care for affected people and ensure the safety of those who report human rights violations caused by corporate actors.

A member of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights reported on the first official country visit to Mongolia in 2012 and shared the Working Group’s draft country mission template. Mongolia was the first country to be visited because there are great opportunities there to implement change. There has been rampant economic growth in Mongolia in recent years, as well as a recent uptick in mining activities. During its official country visits, the Working Group focuses on the main business-related impacts on human rights, what the key actors are doing to address these impacts, the challenges impeding key actors from meeting their human rights obligations, available opportunities to advance implementation and dissemination, and finally, good practices and lessons learned in the visited country that can be shared with others.

On the last day of the Forum, I attended a session that focused on challenges in the UN’s role in implementing the Guiding Principles. After listening to the representatives from the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights, UNICEF, the UN Global Compact Office, and the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, I made an intervention for HRA, asking what the panel thought the UN could do in situations where countries are unable or unwilling to provide victims of human rights abuses committed by corporations with a remedy. Ms. Heba

Mostafa, from the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt, responded with the suggestion that perhaps governments could give a more robust mandate to the Working Group to address this concern about providing a remedy to victims. While Ms. Mostafa seemed sympathetic to this problem, there was no mention of an international mechanism of accountability by the panel.

During the closing session, Mr. Ruggie commented that in the 18 months since the endorsement of the Guiding Principles, much progress had been made. He stated that “the era of declaratory corporate social responsibility was over.” In his opinion, corporations now have to act on their promises of better behavior. However, it remains to be seen how communities impacted by human rights abuses committed by corporations will fare with the Guiding Principles – but no additional international mechanism of accountability in place – to protect them from irresponsible or negligent corporate actors.

Millennium Development Goals Post-2015

By Birte Scholz

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set to expire in 2015, UN agencies and member states have been working since before the 2010 MDG Summit to craft a post-2015 UN development agenda process. In 2012, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed a panel of 27 persons, co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the UK, to advise him on a global development framework beyond 2015, the target date for the Millennium Development Goals.

Over the past year, the panel consulted a variety of stakeholders during face-to-face consultations at national and regional levels and through online initiatives and high level meetings in London, Monrovia and Bali, to guide the panel’s vision for global development.

This culmination of the report was released and presented to the Secretary General for his review on May 31, 2013, in their report “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”.

The Panel has envisioned five transformative shifts to build a forward looking, compelling and integrated sustainable development agenda: 1. Leave no one behind; 2. Put Sustainable Development at the core; 3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; 4. Build peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions; and 5. Forge a new Global Partnership.

The 12 goals suggested focus on creating a single, sustainable development agenda. The priorities resonate with those of grassroots women around increasing opportunities, reducing climate change, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and raising standards of livelihoods, food security, health care, water/sanitation and education to even the inequality of poverty. Importantly the Panel recognizes the need for a “people centered approach”.

“We must keep faith with the promise of the MDGs and now finish the job. The MDGs aspired to halve poverty. After 2015 we should aspire to put an end to hunger and extreme poverty as well as addressing poverty in all its other forms.”

Goal No 1, to end poverty, has as its targets a complete reduction of the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day. Its second target focuses on ensuring secure rights to land, property and other assets for women and men.

The second goal focuses on the empowerment of girls and women and the achievement of gender equality. Targets under this goal include: Prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against girls and women; ending child marriage; ensuring equal right of women to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register a business and open a bank account; and the elimination of discrimination against women in political, economic and public life. The inclusion of women’s equal rights over land and property, as well as other rights supporting women’s autonomy, is a welcome addition.

The remaining goals include: 3) Increased quality education; 4) Ensure health care; 5) Improved food security and nutrition; 6) Achieve universal access to water and sanitation; 7) Secure sustainable energy; 8) Create jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth; 9) Manage natural resources and good governance; 10) Ensure good governance and effective institutions; 11) Ensure stable and peaceful societies; and a 12) Create a global enabling environment and catalyze long term finance.

Overall the system calls for intense transparency and accountability, with the suggestion to unify the

global goals with national plans for development, a system of global monitoring and peer review, and an implementation system for targets that is focused on multi-stakeholder partnership and cooperation, and partnership accountability.

Human rights must be a part of all Post-2015 goals, with clear indicators to measure the advancement of women and men’s ability to realize their rights to equality, food, housing, water and sanitation, education and health. Ultimately, the post 2015 development agenda is about the human right to dignity- to give all persons the opportunity to live with equal rights, in dignity and peace.

HRA NEWSMAKERS

Long-time HRA advisory member Paul Hoffman, now a partner at Schonbrun, De Simone, Seplov, Harris, Hoffman & Harrison, argued before U.S. Supreme Court this past March that, under the Alien Tort Statute (ATS), corporations should be held accountable in U.S. courts for grave human rights abuses committed abroad.

For over 30 years lawyers like Hoffman have been using the ATS to hold foreign nationals and corporations accountable in U.S. federal courts for actions committed broad. The Supreme Court case, *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum Co.*, 2013 WL 1628935 (U.S.), threatened to narrow, or even wipe out, application of the ATS for these types of cases.

On April 17, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum* that the human rights abuses alleged to have occurred in Nigeria were too remote from the U.S. to provide for federal court jurisdiction under the ATS. While the plaintiffs’ claims were denied, the Court’s decision was narrow, barring the claims because all parties were non-U.S. citizens and all of the relevant conduct took place outside of the U.S. Legal experts interpreted Justice Kennedy’s concurrence as giving hope for other human rights cases under the ATS that do not involve U.S. parties, for example, cases involving U.S. corporations and/or plaintiffs who are citizens of the U.S.

HRA has co-written and joined numerous ATS amici briefs with Hoffman and is honored to have him on our Advisory Committee and congratulate him for his ground-breaking work to hold human rights violators accountable.

HRA ANNUAL MEETING

HRA held its Annual Meeting on April 16, 2013, at the University of San Francisco School of Law. The following were elected by HRA members to serve on HRA's Board of Directors for 2013-2014: Connie de la Vega, Kimberly Irish, Jeremiah Johnson, Jeffrey Kaloustian, Nicole Phillips, Birte Scholz, and Julianne Cartwright Traylor.

HRA is fortunate to have Jeff Kaloustian join the Board. Jeff was a Frank C. Newman intern in 2008, and worked on food security and land grabbing with the UN Human Rights Council. He graduated from USF in 2009 and has established the Law Office of Jeffrey L. Kaloustian, a progressive criminal defense firm with a focus on human rights.

HRA thanks Amol Mehra for his four years of service on HRA's Board and wishes him well in his position as the Director of International Corporate Accountability Roundtable.

At its first meeting following the Annual Meeting, the Board elected the following officers for 2013-2014: Kimberly Irish, President; Connie de la Vega, Treasurer; and Jeffrey Kaloustian, Secretary.

Your contributions are greatly appreciated by HRA! Long-time HRA supporter Holly Newman, daughter of Frannie and Frank Newman, generously agreed to match contributions up to \$2,500 every year. If you did not renew your membership earlier this year, please consider doing so now as it will count towards the matching fund. We would especially urge those of you with an * by your name to renew your membership as this will be your last newsletter otherwise.

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Human Rights Advocates

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I want to become an HRA member to support HRA's activities and receive the Newsletter and announcements of events. Enclosed is my check for annual dues, fully tax-deductible, in the amount of:

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