

Report of the United Nations Ministry
Sue Rheem, Representative to the United Nations

1. The report of the Ministry at the United Nations to the 2022 Executive Committee meeting of the World Communion of Reformed Churches highlights aspects of the ongoing witness that a presence at the United Nations makes possible.
2. Due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations continued its practice of conducting UN meetings and participation via online platforms.
3. The Ministry at the United Nations continued to maintain two broad areas of engagement: to equip individuals and communities to engage in global discipleship and to advocate for justice and peace in the name of Jesus Christ at the United Nations.
4. The Ministry was staffed by the representative to the United Nations and part time mission specialist. A young adult volunteer and student intern from Princeton Theological Seminary joined the office in the fall for one year term. The Presbyterian Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA) funds 100% of expenses at the United Nations Ministry. The staff has been working remotely.
5. The Ministry at the United Nations continued to work on the Presbyterian Mission Agency Matthew 25 vision and the three focus areas of **dismantling structural racism, eradicating systematic poverty, and building congregational vitality.**
6. Rooted in the Reformed tradition, we affirm that God, Creator and Sovereign of all, so loved the world that Jesus the Son was sent with a message of justice and peace, redemption and reconciliation. God calls us to serve as ambassadors for Christ seeking God's peace and reconciliation in a world where humanity and creation are wounded, broken, and in need of healing.¹ Together we seek life in all its fullness by:
7. Met with CGS Members Philip Peacock and Hanns Lessing in New York City in November 2021 to examine how to strengthen our relationship and to highlight priorities of work. A new memorandum of understanding between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches continues to be in process.
8. Addressed the issues of **climate justice, ecological justice and care for creation** through participation in the process to implement recommendations on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Presbyterian Church (USA) sent a small delegation to COP26, which was held from 1 November to 12 November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland. World Communion of Reformed Churches was invited to be part of the delegation.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

9. Also addressed **climate justice** by participating in the **Committee of Religious NGOs Climate Working Group** to better prepare NGOs on the COP process and raise awareness on the impacts of climate change, and to work towards better collaboration among faith-based and UN community in New York.

10. **UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**. CSW was held virtually from 15 March to 26 March, 2021. The commission focused on women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Over 25,000 delegates participated from around the world. We hope to welcome partners from the World Communion of Reformed Churches to future commissions.

12. The Ministry participated in the 59th Session of the **United Nations Commission on Social Development (CSocD)** from 8 February to 17 February, 2021. The theme for this year's commission was "socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all." We hope to welcome partners from the World Communion of Reformed Churches in future commissions.

13. Advocated for just peace, human rights, particularly gender rights, and humanitarian assistance for **Afghanistan** after United States pulled out its military forces in August 2021. We continue to advocate with the United Nations Security Council as part of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council for human rights, peace and security, and humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan.

14. Advocated for a just and lasting peace in **Syria**. We continue to advocate with the United Nations Security Council as part of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council advocating for a just and lasting peace in Syria after over a decade of war.

15. Expressed concern for the protection of religious minorities in **Iraq and Syria** with special attention to Christians.

16. Advocated for peace for **Israel-Palestine**. Participated in the NGO Working Group on Israel-Palestine. We also advocated with the Security Council in opposing the illegal annexation of land in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and monitored the discussions around the question of statehood for Palestine. Attended sessions of Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

17. Monitored and advocated on **Nicaragua, Venezuela and Colombia** and advocated with the United Nations Security Council on issues related to human rights, democracy and peace, migration, and development.

18. Continued to monitor and advocate on **Cuba** at the United Nations and support for lifting of US sanctions on Cuba.

19. Monitored and advocated on **Sudan, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Cameroon** and advocated with the United Nations Security Council on issues related to migration, development, human rights, democracy and peace.

20. Monitored and advocated on **Korean Peninsula, Philippines, Myanmar** and advocated with the United Nations Security Council and UN agencies and international human rights organizations on issues related to human rights, democracy, sanctions, peace, migration, and development.

21. Participated in the work of **NGO Committee on Migration** to realize justice for migrants, refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, trafficked persons by examining environment/climate-induced displacement and situations of vulnerability.

22. There will continue to be needs and opportunities for the Reformed family to work and witness for peace and justice within the context of the UN.

23. I give thanks for all who have been partners in the work described above and who support the ministry through prayer, participation, and financial gifts in these challenging times as the world continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. I am particularly grateful for my colleagues, Ivy Lopedito, Leah Brooks, and Angelina Devincenzo, as well as our colleagues in the Office of Public Witness, particularly Catherine Gordon and Jimmie Hawkins, the director of the advocacy offices, as we have learned to work remotely together and for my colleagues in the ecumenical community as we have supported one another through this time to work for God's peace and justice at the UN.