



# Quaker United Nations Office

## LETTER OF GREETING TO FRIENDS: JUNE 2012

Dear Friends,

The Quaker United Nations Offices in Geneva and New York send warm greetings to Friends everywhere.

We write this soon after our return from the 6<sup>th</sup> World Gathering of Friends at Kabarak University in Kenya, humbled by the love and faithfulness of our Quaker sisters and brothers working in their communities around the world for peace and for justice. We heard from Friends from the South and from the North. We heard of concerns about violence and insecurity, of ecological degradation and climate change, of intolerance and exclusion, of rights denied and injustices left unaddressed, of corruption and rampant inequality. And we heard of wonderful, restorative work by Quakers and their partners, in communities and in the corridors of power, of needs met, wounds healed, and voices raised up. We return affirmed in our witness at the United Nations on behalf of all Friends.

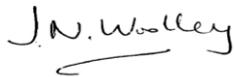
In Geneva, we are thriving on exploring interconnections among different parts of what we do. In the evolution of our work on Peace & Disarmament, we discovered that the area of Conflict, Collaboration and Natural Resources, linked with our earlier focus on migration and climate change, brings together many of our interests. In our Human Rights & Refugees work, focused on women prisoners, children of prisoners and the right of conscientious objection to military service, new opportunities continue to present themselves – most recently in the neglected issue of the effect on children of having a parent or relative sentenced to death. Our work on Global Economic Issues is exploring whether international trade and intellectual property rules that treat food as a “commodity” are compatible with sustainable food production, especially by smallholder farmers in developing countries, and the provision of sufficient food for all. This links to a process of discerning a possible role for QUNO in the international climate change negotiations, a concern that has been reaching us from the World Gathering and from several Yearly Meetings.

In New York we continue to grapple with the challenges of peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict, working with partners on the ground and beyond New York to bring insights and lessons learned to inform decisions made by policy makers at the UN. We have facilitated and participated in high level discussions in New York, in Washington DC and in Geneva on prevention, on mediation, and on the intersection between peacebuilding and development, reinforcing our core messages of inclusion and reconciliation. In November we hosted, together with the American Friends Service Committee, a delegation of Chinese academics in a series of meetings with UN officials and NGOs in New York, to discuss different approaches to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. We have facilitated a series of visits from peacebuilding experts and others to provide their insights on complex conflict-affected environments such as Liberia, Somalia, Myanmar, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. And we continue to consult with member states as they deliberate on the appropriate response to situations of conflict and fragility around the world.

We strive to ensure that Quaker agencies doing international work know of and support each others' work. In November, staff of all the Quaker agencies active at the UN met in Geneva, while in April we were pleased to help facilitate a meeting in London of the heads of Quaker Service Agencies worldwide (those with paid staff doing international work) which covered issues such as Friends' work at a policy level, and the role Quaker service agencies might play in revitalizing the Society of Friends. Staff of QUNO New York and QUNO Geneva work together ever more closely – one symbol of this is our joint report of recent work, the QUNO Review 2011 which is available in English, French and Spanish through our website. This last year also saw fascinating personal description and analysis of QUNO work by our two longest serving staff members in recent times – by David Atwood in the Backhouse Lecture 2012 to Australia Yearly Meeting and by Rachel Brett in the Swarthmore Lecture 2012 to Britain Yearly Meeting. In building the future possibility of such magnificent contributions to peace and justice among people and nations, we see as vital the role of young people; thus we continue to offer one year Programme Assistantships and to organize the Geneva Summer School.

We thank Friends for your faithful support of our work, and ask you to hold us in your thoughts and prayers in the year to come.

In Friendship,



Jonathan Woolley,  
Director, Geneva



Andrew Tomlinson,  
Director, New York