MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

YEAR IN REVIEW 2015

NYC

Mayor's Office for International Affairs

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Letter from the Commissioner

It is a pleasure and great honor to serve as Commissioner for the New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs. New York City is home to the largest diplomatic community in the world - 193 Permanent Missions, 114 Consulates, and the headquarters of the United Nations. The Office is the primary liaison between the City of New York and the diplomatic community, foreign governments, the United Nations, the U.S. Department of State, and 75 trade missions. Over the past year my team and I have sought to make the office a global platform from which the City promotes its goals for a more just and equitable society, showcases the diversity of New Yorkers, and shares policies and best practice with the world.

2015 was a great year for the International Affairs (IA) team. My office has facilitated meetings and connections between more than **206 visiting foreign delegations** from **54 countries** across the globe with **52 city agencies** to share best practice on a variety of urban challenges. I have personally met with **96** leaders from the international community to foster positive relations and to strengthen collaboration between the diplomatic community, New York City's agencies and local neighborhoods. With 37 percent of the City's population foreign-born and an estimated 200 languages spoken throughout the five boroughs, the diplomatic community plays an important role in our ability to best serve the residents of our global city.

Cities matter. With most of the world's population concentrated in urban areas, cities are critical for global growth and are hubs of culture, creativity, and innovation. New York City, like many cities across the globe, is grappling with some of the most pressing challenges of our generation – from combatting effects of climate change to creating a more equitable City that allows families, businesses and our youth to thrive. My office seeks to facilitate long-standing partnerships that bring together thought leaders and experts from around the world for important exchanges of ideas that lead to action.

Last year, we launched three exciting programs focused on key New York City priorities, discussed further in the pages ahead: **Connecting Local to Global, New Yorkness of the UN,** and **Global Vision | Urban Action.** We are always looking for new ideas for engagement, and in the past year, we have been grateful to collaborate on programs with so many great partners.

2015 also marked the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, and we had the honor of welcoming His Holiness Pope Francis as well as the largest convening of world leaders at the UN in recent history for the opening of the General Assembly, whereupon the formal adoption of the post-2015 development agenda took place.

This Year in Review offers a glimpse into IA's everyday work. As you read through, I invite you to see my office as a resource and partner for the important work ahead in 2016. Also feel free to join the discussion on Twitter by following us at @globalnyc.

Best regards,

Penny Abeywardena
Commissioner

History & Mission

The world in 1962 was stymied in chaos: the Cuban Missile Crisis brought the United States to the brink of war with the Soviet Union; the U.S. escalated involvement in an unpopular war in Vietnam; and the Cold War was far from thawing. Global affairs took an increasingly prominent position in New York City, often in polite diplomacy or sharp debate at the United Nations and on the streets of an increasingly global and diverse city.

In 1962, one decade after New York City became home to the UN Headquarters, Mayor Robert Wagner established the position of the New York City Commissioner for the United Nations to act as a liaison between the diplomatic community and local residents, businesses, and government. Fifty years later, the office has evolved, not simply by name, but by function and purpose. The New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs serves as the primary liaison with the diplomatic community – which includes the United Nations, 193 Permanent Missions to the United Nations, 114 Consulates, and United Nations affiliates – while also promoting New York City's equity agenda and sharing best practice globally.

Who is the diplomatic community in New York City?
193 Permanent Missions to the United Nations, 114 Consulates, United Nations, and United Nations affiliates.

What is the difference between a Permanent Mission and a Consulate?
Permanent Missions deal with matters related to the work of the United Nations. A Permanent Mission is headed by a Permanent Representative. A Consulate is headed by a Consul General. Consular duties include supporting that country's nationals living abroad and issuing visas and other legal documents.

UN Delegates welcomed at City Hall during the first year of the UN in NYC, October 1946 (Photo Credit: UN Photo)

Mayor Bill de Blasio addressing world leaders at the 2014 UN Climate Summit (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Key Functions

Foreign Delegation Visits:

From February through November 2015, IA made connections between more than **206 visiting foreign delegations** from **54 different countries** and **52 city agencies**. In 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio held substantive meetings with **18 international government leaders** both in New York and during trips to other countries.

Team IA values bringing the entire diplomatic community together. (L-R) Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Gallach, Commissioner Abeywardena, and Consul General of Mexico Fuentes-Berain (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Commissioner Abeywardena with UN Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

City of New York/U.S. Department of State Diplomatic and Consular Parking Program:

In close collaboration with the New York City Departments of Transportation and Finance, IA facilitates the parking needs of diplomats in a manner that makes it easy for the community to do their important work, while taking into consideration the equities of everyday New Yorkers – from congestion and traffic flow to security.

Host City Operations:

IA partners with a number of City agencies and the United States Department of State to ensure maximum legal protections for Missions and Consulates, and their representatives in New York City. Similarly, IA works with these same entities to ensure the full compliance of the diplomatic community with local laws and regulations. IA's legal arm has significantly expanded the breadth and depth of its collaborative work with partner institutions in an effort to provide proactive service to New York City's diplomats.

UN General Assembly:

Each September, New York City hosts the United Nations General Assembly. IA was proud to partner with the United Nations, the diplomatic community, law enforcement agencies including the New York Police Department (NYPD), as well as the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and the Department of Buildings (DOB) to welcome the largest convening of world leaders at the UN for the opening of the 2015 UN General Assembly.

Connecting Local to Global

The *Connecting Local to Global* (CL2G) program links New York City's domestic policy priorities and agendas to conversations around the world. With this program, IA is creating opportunities for NYC Agencies and the consular community to share best practice.

IDNYC for all New Yorkers: Trainings at the Consulates

New York City has launched an ambitious and dynamic municipal ID program, or IDNYC, that has had tangible impact on the lives of all New Yorkers. The IDNYC signifies equality and access regardless of immigration or economic status – unlocking hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to a myriad of city services and institutions from libraries, zoos, museums to banking services and credit unions. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Consulate General of India and Consulate General of Mexico, IA organized IDNYC briefings and trainings for consular staff from over 30 countries. These interactive regional briefings helped guide consular staff on how to handle IDNYC inquiries and provided training for those staff in daily contact with constituents to provide accurate information about the program.

Commissioner Aberywardena, Consul General Mulay of India, Commissioner Agarwal at IDNYC training for consular staff from countries in the Asia-Pacific (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

> **"The Mexican Consulate applauds New York City and the Mayor's Office for International Affairs' commitment to elevating the social well being of its immigrant residents who contribute daily towards the social, cultural, economic, and civil development of the City."**
> **– Ambassador Sandra Fuentes-Berain, Consul General of Mexico**

> **"The Mayor's Office for International Affairs has played an instrumental role in ensuring that consulates and their surrounding communities have access to IDNYC and its fantastic benefits."**
> **– Commissioner Nisha Agarwal, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**

(L-R) Commissioner Abeywardena, Counsel Wiley, Commissioner Pierre-Louis speaking to NY1's Errol Lewis on NYC's work to support survivors of domestic violence (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Mayor's Office of Food Policy and IA team at the Consulate General of Italy taking part in the #bigapplecrunch campaign to celebrate food and get New Yorkers thinking about healthy, seasonal eating (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

A Focus on Gender Equity

Under Mayor Bill de Blasio's leadership, New York City has strived to put women at the center of the city's efforts to reduce inequality. IA has focused on amplifying New York City's groundbreaking work on gender equity and its efforts to address domestic violence.Through partnerships with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, IA shared resources available for domestic violence victims and survivors with more than 100 consulates and diplomatic missions in order to highlight NYC strategies to support survivors of domestic violence. Further, in collaboration with First Lady Chirlane McCray's office and Counsel Maya Wiley's office, New York City became the first city to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with UN Women's Safe Cities Global Initiative in a promise to enhance safety and empowerment of women.

Food Security at Home and Abroad

In cooperation with the Consulate General of Italy in New York and the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, IA hosted an event commemorating the signing of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and Framework for Action, of which NYC is a signatory. The Milan Pact builds a global network of local government leaders who are taking action to develop more sustainable and equitable food systems in urban settings. As New Yorkers prepared to gather with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving, IA reached out to the diplomatic community with support from the Human Resources Administration and the Office of Food Policy to ensure that all residents of New York City – including nationals from diverse communities – were aware of the broad range of benefits, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, to which they are entitled to.

Americans with Disabilities Act – 25th Anniversary

July 2015 marked the historic achievement of the disability rights movement. In celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IA partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to create a program at the United Nations highlighting the City's leadership in providing access and opportunity to New Yorkers. The event centered around a panel discussion featuring Commissioner Calise and other leading disability advocates on global disability rights and the impact of the ADA in NYC and beyond.

For the first time NYC invited the diplomatic community to participate in the City's iconic holiday toy drive and the gifts were plentiful! (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

> **"We commend the Mayor's Office for International Affairs for their tremendous work collaborating with all international communities in the City."**
>
> **– Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay, Consul General of India**

Support after the Nepal Earthquake Tragedy

New York City has the largest Nepalese community in the United States. In the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake tragedy in April 2015, IA worked with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a non-profit, to raise funds for NGOs assisting the 8 million earthquake victims.

City-Wide Holiday Toy Drive

The holiday cheer and bright lights of New York City bring a smile to all New Yorkers – and this holiday season, IA partnered with NYC Service to make the 2015 holiday season special for every child, including many in need. By expanding the NYC toy drive to the diplomatic community, IA's partnership garnered 88 toys from 12 missions and consulates that were distributed at a temporary shelter for homeless families in the Bronx.

> **"The Mayor's Office for International Affairs was able to arrange high-level visibility for our 25th Anniversary display at the United Nations, arrange panel discussions on the topic of disability with the US Mission and Member States and connect us with Ambassadors and world leaders on disability."**
>
> **– Commissioner Victor Calise, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities**

New Yorkness of the UN

In 2015, the Mayor's Office for International Affairs launched the *New Yorkness of the UN*, an initiative designed to create new opportunities for learning between New Yorkers and the United Nations in an effort to fully integrate the UN into the fabric of our City.

NYC Junior Ambassadors

NYC Junior Ambassadors is a partnership with the NYC Department of Education, the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation that is focused on empowering 7th graders in all five boroughs of New York City to become actively engaged with the United Nations and its mission of addressing the most pressing challenges in the world. The competition targets New York City youth at a critical time in their personal and intellectual growth, and seeks to help them understand the real connections between their communities and international affairs. IA received a total of 73 applications from after-school programs, public and private schools in all five boroughs and 11 were selected.

NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee: New York City-based local and global leaders offered their expertise by reviewing applications and selecting the final **eleven** classrooms. NYC Junior Ambassadors Selection Committee members include: **Bill Chong** (Commissioner, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development), **Daniel Dromm** (New York City Council, 25th District), **Kathy Calvin** (President and CEO, United Nations Foundation), **Carmen Fariña** (Chancellor, New York City Department of Education), **Melissa Mark-Viverito** (Speaker, New York City Council), and **Valerie Rockefeller Wayne** (Chair, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Board Member of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors)

During a visit to Intermediate School 51 Edwin Markham in Staten Island, Commissioner Abeywardena listens to ideas from student leaders working on lego engineering (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

"The key partnerships the Department of Youth and Community Development has forged with the Mayor's Office for International Affairs has helped us in our efforts to strengthen communities and educate young people about the diverse City we live in."

– Commissioner Bill Chong, Department of Youth and Community Development

"Through creative and effective engagement with the UN and UN missions, the International Affairs office has reinvigorated the special relationship between one of the world's great cities and the institution that represents the aspirations of all the world's people."

– Kathy Calvin, NYC Junior Ambassadors selection member and President of UN Foundation

IDNYC Pop-Up Site at the United Nations

IA partnered with the office of the UN Secretary-General to host an IDNYC pop-up registration site on the UN campus in order to assist UN staff and delegates in obtaining IDNYC cards. This exciting collaboration sought to reinforce the idea that the diplomatic community, while foreign nationals, are also New Yorkers. This partnership resulted in over **1,700** new IDNYC registrants, including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon!

"I have been calling New York City – the great New York City – my home. Now with this pop-up registration service [at the United Nations], I am able to call myself a real New Yorker": Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Mayor de Blasio while discussing IDNYC at the UN (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

(L-R) Commissioner Agarwal, Mayor de Blasio, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Commissioner Abeywardena on UN campus for IDNYC pop-up registration (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Even if you're a UN Delegate, you are also a New Yorker. Mayor de Blasio at the UN pop-up registration site for IDNYC, assisting the Secretary-General sign up for his ID (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

> **"There is only one institution in this world that brings together all the nations of the world, and fosters peace and progress and the intense devotion to human rights for all, and that is the United Nations. [New York City] is honored to be that host."**
>
> **– - Mayor de Blasio, remarks at the 2015 Upstander Awards ceremony**

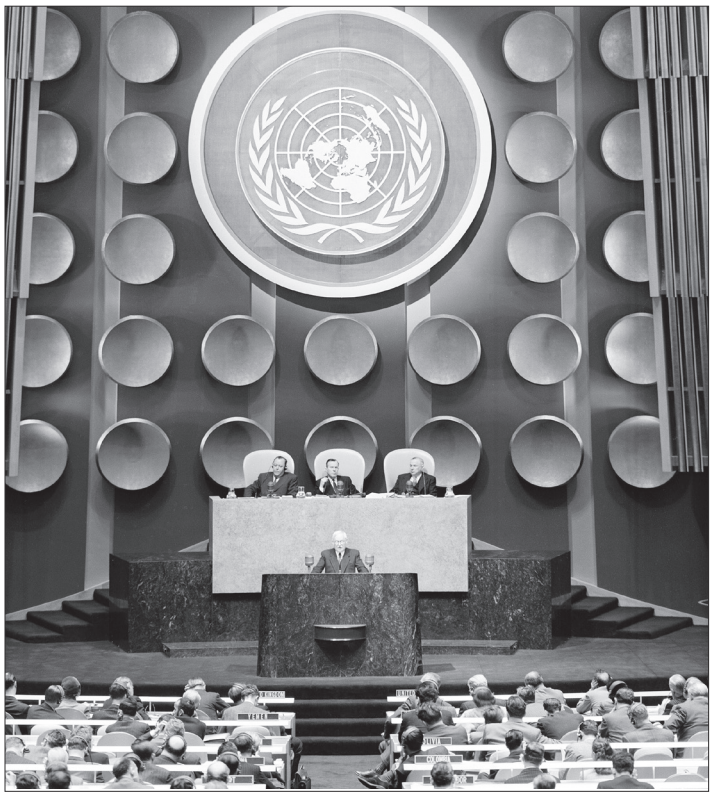
UN Economic and Social Council meets at Hunter College in New York, May 1946 (Photo Credit: UN Photo)

View of the site of the future permanent headquarters of the United Nations, looking north toward the Queensboro Bridge, December 1946 (Photo Credit: UN Photo)

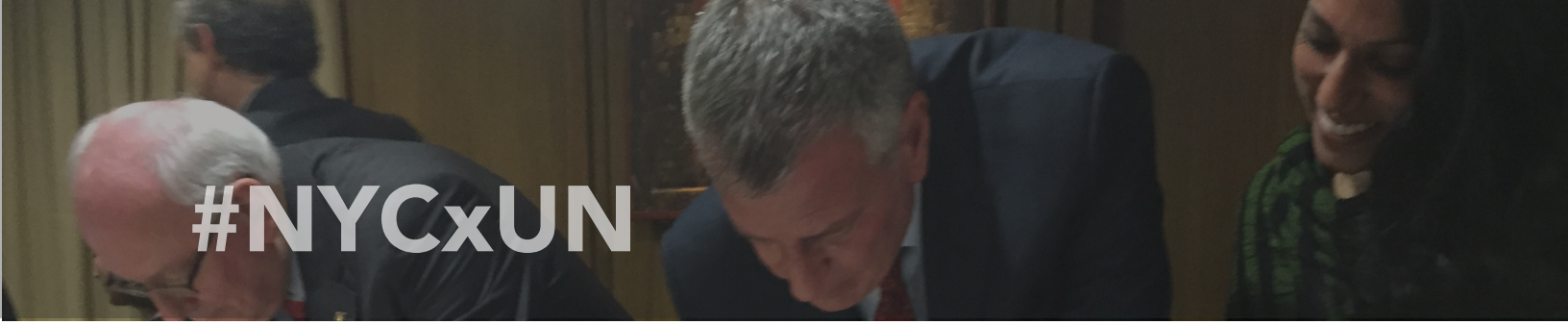
A Walk Through the History of the United Nations

As the United Nations charter was enshrined, the search for a permanent home was underway with cities across the United States competing to house the new engine to safeguard peace. In summer 2015, IA curated a photo exhibition of New York City and the United Nations growing together, opening up a treasure trove of history to UN staffers and visitors. When the United Nations celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2015, IA was proud to highlight the United Nations' New York City story as the institution reflected on its achievements and forged ahead to ensure peace and security for all.

> **"New York is a center where people from all lands have always been welcomed and where they have shared common aspirations and achievements. It is my belief that this City affords an environment uniquely fitted to the task of the United Nations and that the people of New York would like to have the United Nations here permanently."**
> **– John D. Rockefeller, December 10, 1946**



The seventh session of the UN General Assembly at the newly completed New York City headquarters, October 1952 (UN Photo/MB)



(L-R) Commissioner Silver, Commissioner Abeywardena, and UN Chef de Cabinet Malcorra at the Mandela Day ribbon cutting to inaugurate the UN Food Garden (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Madame Ban, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Mayor de Blasio, First Lady Chirlane McCray at the 2015 New York City Upstander Awards ceremony (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Nelson Mandela Day: United Nations Food Garden

In recognition of President Nelson Mandela's contributions to peace and freedom on International Nelson Mandela Day, the United Nations, the NYC Parks Department's Green Thumb program, the largest community gardening program in the United States, and the Brooklyn Grange, a rooftop farm business, partnered to open a small-scale food garden and fruit-bearing trees on the UN Headquarters property. Volunteers and IA inaugurated the UN Food Garden, exemplifying the theme of Nelson Mandela Day – "take action, inspire change." The project reflects the UN and New York City's advocacy for food security, environmental responsibility, and stewardship of the land.

> "The United Nations draws great inspiration from its long-standing home in New York. The Mayor's Office for International Affairs is helping to strengthen connections between the UN community and our great host city as we strive to empower women and girls, bolster access to justice, address climate change and ensure a healthy start in life for every child. At this time of global test and opportunity, the United Nations looks forward to continued partnership with all New Yorkers in building a better world for all."
>
> **– UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**

(L-R) Ambassador vanden Heuvel, Founder of Four Freedoms Park; UN Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson; UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Al Hussein, Commissioner Abeywardena at the flower laying ceremony at Four Freedoms Park on 2015 Human Rights Day (Photo Credit: OHCHR Photo/ Maulshree Gangwar)

#HRD15: "Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always."

New York City is leading the charge in addressing some of the most pressing challenges confronting cities worldwide. On 2015 International Human Rights Day, IA coordinated a city-wide social media campaign to share with the world the diverse ways in which NYC agencies and offices worked to safeguard the freedoms of New Yorkers everyday through the lens of the 2015 UN-designated theme: "Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always."

GLOBAL VISION | URBAN ACTION

#NYCxSDG

Connecting OneNYC and the Sustainable Development Goals

Progress on the development agenda was tremendous for the global community in 2015. For New York City, the same forward movement was true on the local level. With the April 2015 launch of *OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City*, New York City is tackling urban challenges through an innovative blueprint focused on growth, equity, sustainability, and resiliency. In December 2015, IA launched Global Vision | Urban Action at the Ford Foundation to highlight the synergies between New York City's local development initiatives and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

(L-R) Assistant Secretary-General Thomas Gass, Director Mesa, Commissioner Abeywardena, Ambassador Kamau, Director Tarlow speaking at the inaugural Global Vision | Urban Action panel discussion on the synergy between OneNYC and the SDGs (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

> **"NYC is a world class example of how to take the SDGs local"**
>
> **– Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the UN**

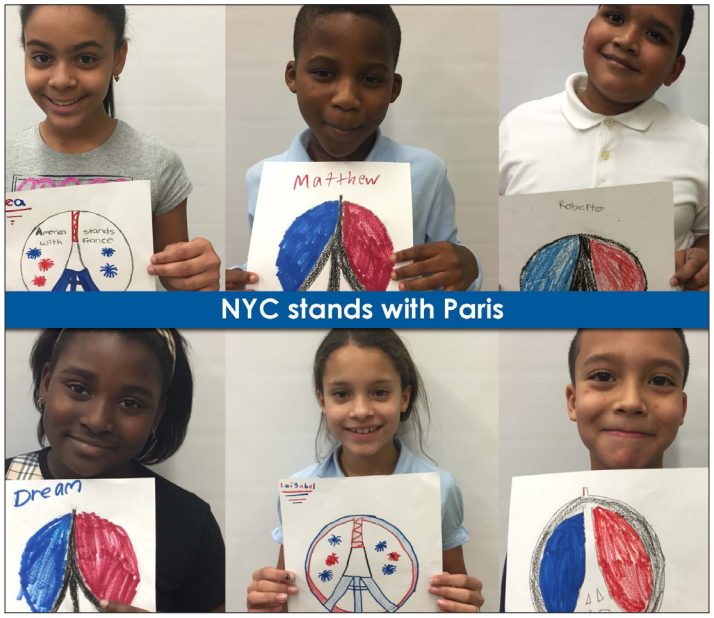
> **The Mayor's Office for International Affairs is an invaluable partner to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and is working to transform the relationship between New York City and the UN community—knitting NYC's diplomatic community closer and re-embracing New York's indispensable role as the home of the UN. The U.S. Mission to the UN credits IA for helping lead the world in fighting inequality and promoting diversity and inclusive economic growth – pillars of the UN sustainable development agenda."**
>
> **- Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Representative to the United Nations**

Global Partners

New York City Global Partners, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization housed in the Mayor's Office for International Affairs. As a leading international city, New York engages in partnerships with cities around the world on a variety of issues. Global Partners serves as a unique tool to convene representatives of other global cities around shared problems, building on innovations being implemented here in New York and creating a global conversation around issues of shared concern.

INNOVATION EXCHANGE: Immigrant Inclusion

Global Partners is building on past efforts to share municipal best practices globally, partnering with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on a pilot program designed to drive innovation around immigrant inclusion.



Global Partners Junior students from St. Mary's Recreation Center in the Bronx share messages of peace with their peers in Paris in November 2015 (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

GLOBAL PARTNERS JUNIOR

Global Partners Junior ("GPJ"), is an online exchange program that connects nearly 1,000 underserved NYC students ages 9-13 to 2,000 peers in cities around the world. Using an online platform and a themed curriculum that changes annually, students partner with global classrooms to brainstorm creative strategies for making lasting changes in their communities. GPJ is offered in public schools and after-school programs operated by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and the New York City Housing Authority, and in classrooms in more than 30 international cities.

Global Partners Junior students from Glenanda Primary School in Johannesburg, South Africa visiting NYC in summer 2015 (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

Highlights

IA took part in some very special moments throughout 2015 – here are a few highlights:

Mayor de Blasio greets Pope Francis in New York City (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

His Holiness Pope Francis Visits New York City

The visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Manhattan was met with incredible fanfare. As the famous PopeMobile made its way through the city, New York City was proud to host His Holiness as he called for social justice, peace, and equality.

"We're honored to host the United Nations, and host leaders from around the world… We're able to do things locally that in many ways can set the pace for our national governments, and for the international community."

– Mayor de Blasio, remarks at the 2015 Strong Cities Network Launch

A Special Partnership with the City of Paris

New York City enjoys a robust and multifaceted partnership with the City of Paris. From the Mayoral level to the agency level, the two cities work together to elevate cultural and academic relations and foster innovative partnerships, education exchanges, and create mechanisms to share best practice. Paris launched 'La Carte Citoyenne-Citoyen' which was inspired by IDNYC. New York City's officials have participated in conferences in Paris on a range of issues of importance, from building green urban living spaces to the climate COP21 conference in December 2015.

"The City of New York, and especially the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, showed our country compassionate solidarity in the wake of terrorist attacks in France. Paris and New York have also worked together on numerous projects, in the areas of education and new information technology."

– Bertrand Lortholary, Consul General of France

Highlights

Mayor de Blasio shares NYC strategies at the Vatican conference on Modern Slavery and Climate Change hosted by Pope Francis (Photo Credit: Pontifical Academy of Sciences)

(L-R) Paris Mayor Hidalgo holding Mayor de Blasio's IDNYC card (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

International Trips

In 2015, IA supported Mayor Bill de Blasio's critical foreign travel engagements ranging from a visit of solidarity to Paris after the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack to participating at a Vatican conference highlighting global cities' commitment to addressing modern slavery and climate change. A microcosm of the globe, New York City presses forward in addressing challenges big and small that resonate not only with 8.5 million New Yorkers, but on a global level. Mayor de Blasio's overseas travel is an opportunity for the City to showcase that New York City is an urban laboratory ripe with promising initiatives that can enrich and shape the lives of millions.

Mayor de Blasio meets with student leaders in Jerusalem where Arab and Israeli children attend school together (Photo Credit: Mayor's Office)

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International Affairs