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**REVIEW CONFERENCE ON PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION TO PREVENT, CONTROL AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW) IN ALL ITS ASPECTS**

The Review Conference was held June 26 to July 7, 2006. Much has been achieved since the 2001 Program of Action. However, as the spokesman for Kofi Annan said: "The Secretary General is disappointed that the United Nations Conference to review the implementation of the Program of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons has ended without agreeing on an outcome document". For the NGOs, Civil Society and Private Organizations, there are five critical and basic issues that remained unresolved: 1) Integrating the issue of development into small arms control; 2) International Arms Transfers including the tracing and marking of SALW and Ammunitions; 3) National Firearms Legislation; 4) Assistance to Survivors; 5) Follow-on Mechanisms.

The Member States did however agree to continue working on an outcome document. Many States did send high-level delegates who remain committed to the Program of Action and have brought the issue to their nations and effectively focusing the world's attention on the problem of illicit trade in SALW. Most Member States agree with the five issues raised by NGOs but with varying interpretations. All Member States also agree on the need to control illicit arms brokering. The office of the Secretary General assured that a United Nations intergovernmental expert group, which will hold its first session in November, would study this

issue in depth. For more information on the review conference go to: <http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/>.

VIVAT International contributed in the following manner:

- Member of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA).
- Fr. Carmine Curci, a Comboni Missionary, and a VIVAT associate member, spoke at the Side Event on June 29, 2006 on "Mainstreaming SALW work into Development Programming: Importance of Work at the Community Level". The main points of the talk: Communities should be key actors in tackling illicit small arms proliferations in conflict, post-conflict, and non-conflict areas, and a community dimension should be added to the UN PoA process. For a copy of the talk go to: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → Culture of Peace → Disarmament and Small Arms → Fr. Carmine Curci's Talk.
- Joined the Asian Caucus on SALW.
- Lobbied Asian delegates on the five critical and basic issues.

VIVAT International members can help by lobbying their respective governments and remind them of their commitments made to end the illicit trade in SALW. We can also join in national coalitions to end the illicit trade in SALW. While it is the responsibility of our Governments to ensure the cessation of illicit

sale in small arms and light weapons, we must be ready to do our part. As Rebecca Peters, head of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) said: “Although it is your [government’s] responsibility to ensure that

action is taken, we are ready to offer you our expertise and energy to make this vision a reality”. It takes the joint effort of both governments and NGOs to end the illicit trade in SALW.

**INFORMAL INTERACTIVE HEARINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS  
AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT JULY 12, 2006**

The main purpose of the informal interactive hearings is to provide an opportunity for nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to interact with Member States and offer input for the High-level Dialogue on Migration in September. The result of the interactive dialogue will be summarized by the President of the General Assembly in his report reflecting the views and recommendations of these sectors. A key document discussed and critiqued was the Secretary General’s Report on International Migration and Development ([www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → Poverty Eradication → Migration → Secretary General’s Report on International Migration and Development, May 18, 2006). Basically, there were two points raised by NGOs.

The “optimistic” outlook of the Secretary General’s report must be balanced with on-the-ground realities of migration problems. Trafficking, non-compliance with ILO labor standards, refugees and forced migration are just some negative experiences shared by speakers. But most speakers did confirm that there is cause for optimism, however with the caution that human rights of the migrants must be protected by both the “sending” and “receiving” countries.

The second is a reminder of commitments made, instruments drawn and existing international agreements that directly impact on the issue of migration should be implemented. The most important is the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

(<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm>) To date, only 49 countries have signed the convention. Also, DESA recently published the “Compendium of Recommendations on International Migration and Development”, a summary of relevant conventions and documents on migration. ([http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/UN\\_GCIM/UN\\_GCIM\\_ITTMIG.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/UN_GCIM/UN_GCIM_ITTMIG.pdf)) These international agreements need to be incorporated into national laws, regional and international agreements, in order to have the necessary legal effect.

VIVAT International contributed in the following manner:

- Member of the informal Religious at the UN (RUN) Working Group on Migration and in turn a member of the Migration Caucus organized by Office of the President of the General Assembly through the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).
- Participated in the Informal Preparatory Meeting among speakers, NGOs, Civil Society, Private Organizations, Academics, UN bodies and International Organizations organized the Migration Caucus and Office of the President of the General Assembly.
- Attended Key Migration Issues; a series of workshops organized by UNITAR, UNFPA, IOM and ILO:
  - March 15: Labor Migration
  - May 26: HIV, AIDS and Migration

- June 27: Migration and Human Rights

Thus the high level session on migration is both timely and relevant for the international community. Migration is indeed a cross cutting issue. We urge VIVAT members to lobby Member States to uphold international agreements and sign on the International

Convention if your country has not done so. For further information on the NGO Hearings visit: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/NGO\\_Hearings.html](http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/NGO_Hearings.html) For NGO and other sector comments on the Secretary General's Report visit:

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/Text/Migration.pdf>

### **INFORMAL INTERACTIVE HEARINGS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTION (POA) FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC) FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010**

Held on June 22, 2006 with the theme: "Forging Partnership with Civil Society and the Private Sector for Poverty Reduction in the Least Developed Countries", this one-day hearing was organized by the President of the General Assembly to serve as input to the Midterm Comprehensive Global Review of the Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, which will be held on September 18-19, 2006.

Input came from speakers from Civil Society, NGOs and Private Sector and an interactive exchange of views with Member States. There were two main sessions: partnership and entrepreneurship. Most speakers warned of growing disparity not only in their countries but also worldwide. A number of Member States did acknowledge growing poverty, but also pointed out some successes like growing annual GDP growth rate of LDC from 4.4% (1996-2000) to the current 5.5%. But as the report of the President of the GA on the outcome of the hearings noted: "Slow progress witnessed in the least developed countries is mainly due to

structural weaknesses — a combination of pervasive poverty and weak institutional, technical and human capacities". But the heart of the sessions was the recommendations. One recommendation that bears mentioning is strengthening Civil Society, NGOs and Private Sector participation not only in the hearings but also in the PoA process itself.

VIVAT was chosen as one of the speakers during the interactive hearings. VIVAT's oral statement can be accessed at: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → Poverty Eradication → LDC→VIVAT International Intervention. We urge VIVAT members, especially in LDC to participate in the PoA. Contact your government representatives about national plans on poverty eradication. Do send your reports on poverty eradication/alleviation projects. Participate in national and regional consultations and public hearings on poverty eradication. You can check LDC reports at: <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/StartPage.asp?intItemID=2068>

### **PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING 59<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DPI/NGO CONFERENCE ON SEPTEMBER 6 – 8, 2006**

The theme of the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference is: "Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development". It reflects the collective response of NGO, Civil Society and

Private Organizations to a survey done after the 58<sup>th</sup> Conference submitted its final report. The 59<sup>th</sup> Conference intends to be a follow up on pending issues, especially on the issue of the MDGs. The DPI/NGO Conference is an

important UN mechanism that insures the voice of the NGO, Civil Society and Private Organizations are heard immediately before the opening of UN General Assembly. Moreover, the DPI/NGO Conference has become an established forum for networking and exchange of views, opinions, expertise and best practices on relevant issues among NGOs, Member States and UN bodies. It has now included strategic partnership building by inviting representatives of Member States to dialogue with Conference participants. This year, it also aims to provide a policy-building forum for NGO collaboration with the United Nations.

The conference organizers planned the sessions to address these concerns. The opening session is followed by a panel session on “Moving Forward: Accountability, Transparency, Equitable Trade Policies”. The second day will have the morning session on “Achieving Financial and Ecological Sustainability”. The afternoon session will start the round table sessions. The first will be on “Science and Technology for Education”, second on “Emerging Approaches to Healthcare, including

Gender-Based HIV and AIDS”, finally the third on “Human Security: Responsibility to Protect and the Peacebuilding Commission”. All three will be held simultaneously in the afternoon.

The morning session of the final day will again have three roundtables: “Civil Society and Global Partnerships for Development”; “Commitment to Reducing Extreme Poverty and Hunger”, and “Promoting Respect for Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution”. A seventh roundtable is scheduled in the afternoon on “The Role of Media and Communications Technology in Achieving the MDGs”. The closing session will summarize results of the roundtables. Interspersed within the three days are thirty “midday workshops” to deepen the roundtable discussions and themes. These will be held during the lunch break of the three days. For a complete listing of the midday workshops and for more details go to their website: <http://www.undpingoconference.org/> VIVAT is a member of the preparatory committee on midday workshops and will actively participate in the three-day Annual Conference.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

September:

- 6-8: 59th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference
- 12: Opening of the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly
- 14-15: GA High-level Dialogue on International Migration
- 18-19: GA High-level Dialogue on LDC
- 21: International Day of Peace

October:

- 1: International Day of Ageing
- 2: World Habitat Day
- 9: World Post Day
- 15: Launch of “Stand Up Against Poverty” At events around the world, citizens will be invited to stand up against poverty and set a new Guinness World Record for the largest number of people to stand up.
- 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty/MDG Rally (Millennium Campaign)

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