

A TOOL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

13th of September 2007 will be remembered well in the history of humanity that works to create a more just, caring and livable world. It was the day that the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous people was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Declaration provides guidance on basic measures needed to ensure the dignity, survival and well-being of some of the worlds most impoverished and marginalized peoples. The Declaration recognizes the rights of Indigenous Peoples to the lands, territories and natural resources that are critical to their ways of life. The Declaration affirms that Indigenous Peoples, like all peoples, have the right to self-determination. Adoption of the Declaration sends a clear message to the international community that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are not separate from or less than the rights of others, but are an integral and indispensable part of a human rights systems dedicated to the rights of all.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration with an overwhelming majority of 143 votes in favour, only 4 negative votes cast (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States) and 11 abstentions. The Declaration has been negotiated through more than 20 years between nation-states and Indigenous Peoples. Les Malezer, Chair of the Global Indigenous Peoples' Caucus, welcomed the adoption of the Declaration in a statement to the General Assembly: *"The Declaration does not represent solely the viewpoint of the United Nations, nor does it represent solely the viewpoint of the Indigenous Peoples. It is a Declaration which combines our views and interests and which sets the framework for the future. It is a tool for peace and justice, based upon mutual recognition and mutual respect."*



Vivat International hopes that all States will work in good faith to implement in their domestic law and practice this vitally important and long overdue human rights instrument.

For full text of the Declaration in different language visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html>

THE DECLARATION HAVING ITS INFLUENCE NOW!

Supreme Court of Belize, on October 18, quoted the Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples to justify its decision upholding 2 Mayan villages' rights to their traditional lands.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS 3 December 2007. The theme for the International day is *"Decent work for persons with disabilities"*.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY:

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year launches a year of focus on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **December 10, 2007** is Human Rights Day.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MIGRANTS: December 18

On 4 December 2000, the General Assembly, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, proclaimed 18 December International Migrants Day ([resolution 55/93](#)). On that day, in 1990, the Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families ([resolution 45/158](#)).

The photos are faces of Indigenous people who have participated in the Indigenous Forum. Faces of Jubilation and celebration of life.

Foreground photos taken on 13 September 2007 at the General Assembly Hall during the adoption of the Declaration. Center photo is Les Melezer, Chair of the Global Caucus of Indigenous People; Right photo is Victoria Tauli Corpus, the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum of Indigenous People during the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous People.





**THE 60TH DPI/NGO
CONFERENCE:
'CLIMATE CHANGE:
HOW IT IMPACTS US ALL'**

1726 participants representing over 500 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) from more than 62 countries came to participate in the 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 7 September 2007. The Conference reviewed the scientific evidence on climate change, including its consequences on indigenous peoples, water security, land use and the politics of energy. There are clear evidences that global warming is real, mostly manmade and had the potential to devastate our planet. And it is for this reason why tackling climate change required a truly global effort that drew together Governments, the private sector and civil society in “one sustained push for change”.

The Conference held series of round-table discussions on urgent topics related to climate change. Among other issues they dis-

cussed “Water Security and Climate Change”, “Indigenous Peoples, Culture and Traditional Knowledge” as well as “Coping with Climate Change – Best Land Use Practices”. On the 6 September, at the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium, **Vivat International** joined other NGO groups in a panel discussion to unfold issues that deals with **Human Rights and Good Practices in the Face of Climate Change**.

The general perception of climate change as a severe issue that needs to be addressed has markedly changed within the last years. Nevertheless many governments in developed as well as in developing countries still hesitate to take action because of fear of economic hardship. The consequences of climate change especially affect people in poor regions where water security and the lack of it as a result of droughts and floods kill thousands of people. Since in many parts of the world the indigenous communities are among the first victims of climate change, they have a strong commitment to defend their cultures through active participation in efforts to reduce human-induced causes. Coping with climate change and finding ways to mitigate its negative im-

pacts on human life is seen as the big challenge ahead. Solutions need to be found for the problem of massive air pollution thanks to the rapid economic growth in developing countries, environmental degradation, raising sea levels, floods and droughts. Issues concerning sustainable forest management, experimental weather modification programs and the influence of NGOs on their local governments have further been discussed.

For the first time in 60 years the conference participants produced a Conference outcome document that makes recommendations for individual action as well as a collaborative work to combat climate change. This “**Final Declaration**” was agreed upon by delegates on Friday, 7 September 2007, during the Closing Session. The document already urges government, industry, and UN leaders in partnership with the NGO community to emphasize proactive climate change priorities for the greater good in preparation for the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia on December 03-14, 2007.

Visit: http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/conference/http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/conference/pdfs/Final_Declaration.pdf

Why is the Bali Conference of such importance? What can the Bali Conference deliver?

This year’s scientific report from the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made clear beyond doubt that climate change is a reality and can seriously harm the future development of our economies, societies and eco-systems worldwide. Immediate action is needed to be able to prevent the most severe impacts. Since climate change is a global issue, tackling climate change and its impacts can only be successfully coordinated at the international level. The UN Framework on Climate Change presents the appropriate forum to do this. It has been expanded by the Kyoto Protocol which includes emission reduction commitments for developed countries over the period 2008–2012. A new international climate change deal must be put in place in time to ensure that necessary action is undertaken immediately after 2012 when the current phase of the Kyoto Protocol ends. Therefore, comprehensive negotiations on a new climate deal need to begin without further delay. At the Bali Conference, Parties are expected to agree to the launch of this process.



The main goal of the Bali Conference is to deliver this necessary breakthrough and get negotiations going on a new international climate change agreement. The Bali Conference will not deliver a fully negotiated and agreed climate deal but is aimed to set the necessary wheels in motion. Parties need to agree on the key areas which the new climate agreement should cover, such as mitigation (including avoided deforestation), adaptation, technology and financing. They also need to agree on when the talks and negotiations will conclude so that the new climate change deal can be ratified by national governments before the end of 2012. Furthermore, countries should decide on the organizational and procedural arrangements to get to this result. Other important issues will be under negotiation in Bali including adaptation to climate change, the launch of a Fund for adaptation, reducing emissions from deforestation, issues relating to the carbon market, and arrangements for a review of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Conference on Climate Change is not over. During the next year the Final Declaration needs to be put into actions. VIVAT members are encouraged to act now. Please go to www.climatecaucus.net and see how working groups continue.

Note: Some of our VIVAT members in the ASPAC Zone will meet and attend the conference in Bali, Indonesia, 12 /03-14/ 07

LAND TERRACING, INTEGRATED FARMING, REFORESTATION, AND RENEWAL OF WATER RESOURCES

VIVAT International At the 60th Annual DPI/NGO Conference United Nations

VIVAT International participated in the 60th Annual DPI/NGO conference on "Climate Change – How It Impacts Us All," held at the UN Headquarters, New York on September 5-7, 2007 by sharing information about "Human Rights and good practices" conducted by Alex Ganggu and VIVAT members in Flores, Indonesia in facing global climate change and ecological crisis.

In addressing the environmental problems, Alex Ganggu with VIVAT team have promoted sustainable development and nature conservation since 1994 through land terracing (*terrasering*), integrated farming (*wanatani*), reforestation, and renewal of water resources.

VIVAT members have terraced the sides of mountains to provide extra growing areas, and at the same time have conserved the run off water to be controlled for maximum usage. Also, trees are configured and planted in groups of threes, to avoid soil erosion and to further assist in the protection of water conservation. The tools being presently used by the farmers are rather simple implements, such as hoes and machetes. *Terasing* projects have covered 1,116 ha located in the 13 villages throughout the districts of Ende, Nagekeo and Ngada.

"Wanatani" is a concept introduced by international NGOs like OXFAM and socialized by local NGOs and farmers in Flores. It is a model for cultivating integrated farming. Practically, the farming is composed of three components, which simultaneously support each other and generate agriculture, which is ecologically sound, economically productive and socially just. The three components are namely: forests, food plantations, and livestock.

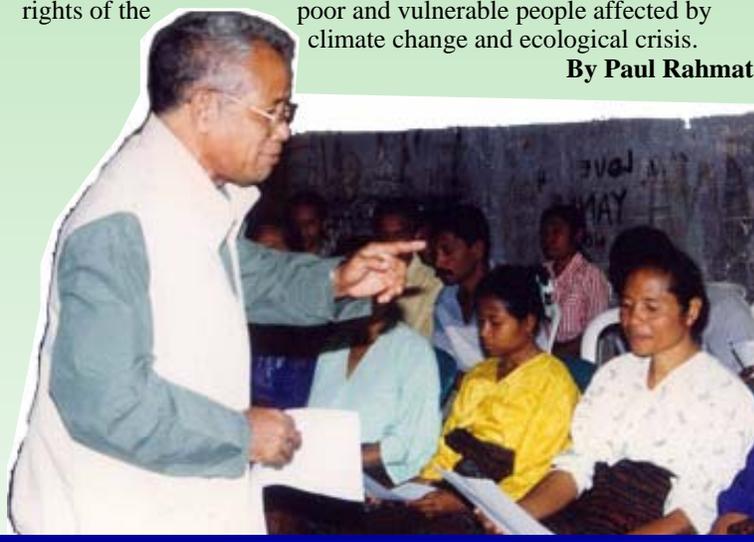
In addition, VIVAT team have carried out a *Reforestation Community Based Management* aiming at motivating and encouraging the indigenous people to plant rain forests in their own customary forests for domestic use such as wood for constructing their houses. As a result, they will not use and damage conservation forests and also

creating a good microclimate for their agriculture. VIVAT members along with the customary leaders and local people implemented this program in the 23 villages throughout the island have planted approximately 121,000 trees, using a plant rotation system.

VIVAT members have also promoted innovative programs in providing an access to clean water such as water piping programs, excavation of ground water, and renewal of water resources. National and international NGOs as well as the Indonesian government immediately adopted the water piping programs. People realize that the key problem was not just access to clean water, but also lack of water resources.

VIVAT members at grassroots communities in Flores, Indonesia have involved for decades in addressing the global concerns on climate change and taken their responsibilities for eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable development as well advocating the rights of the poor and vulnerable people affected by climate change and ecological crisis.

By Paul Rahmat



Alex Ganggu is shown in one of the seminars he conducts. In communicating the ecological issues and sustainable development, Alex Ganggu and VIVAT team have conducted a strategy of campaign through public education, local institutions, and media. The team has constantly increased people's awareness on the ecological crisis through catechetical process, conducting participatory social and structural analysis and joint training and workshops attended by women, farmers, youth, customary leaders, local NGOs and local communities.

WORLD AIDS DAY – DECEMBER 1, 2007

According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 39.5 million people living with HIV, including 2.3 million children. During 2006 some 4.3 million people became newly infected with the virus. Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35. Around 95% of people with HIV/AIDS live in developing nations. But HIV today is a threat to men, women and children on all continents around the world.

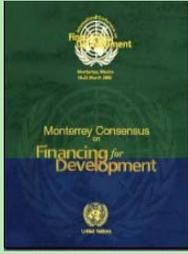
The World AIDS Campaign's (WAC) slogan is "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise". The 2007 theme, "leadership", highlights the need for innovation, vision and perseverance in the face of the AIDS challenge. The campaign calls on all sectors of society such as families, communities and civil society organizations - rather than just governments - to take the initiative and provide leadership on AIDS. See <http://www.avert.org/worldaid.htm>

World AIDS Day is December 1st and the World AIDS Campaign is encouraging everyone to show leadership as an individual, in families, communities or in your place of work.



Vivat members participated in the DPI/NGO Conference 2007 on Climate Change. Left to right: Pat Hogan, Gretta Fernandes, Brian McLaughlin, Louise Nolta, Paulus Rahmat

THE HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT



The High Level Dialogue (HLD) for Financing for Development was held from 23 to 24 October 2007 at UN Headquarters, NY with the theme: “*The Monterrey Consensus: Status of implementation and Tasks Ahead*”.

The first day of the HDL centered on governmental reports that focused on the implementation of

commitments made at Monterrey, Mexico in 2002; many alluded that its implementation has been weak. Real progress in implementing the Consensus has to involve a fundamental and comprehensive reform of the international financial and monetary architecture in order to address its democratic deficit, with enhanced voice and participation of developing countries in decision making and norm setting.

The second day hosted six round tables on the six Monterrey consensus, namely:

1. Mobilizing domestic financial resources for development
2. Mobilizing international resources for development – foreign direct investment and other private flows

1. International trade as an engine for development
2. Increasing international financial and technical cooperation for development
3. External debt

Addressing systemic issues – enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

Eighteen civil society representatives were able to participate in the above mentioned round table meetings as panelist, three in each topic. For more info see the October Issue of Road to Doha (<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/indexNewsLetter.htm>) and also visit www.un.org/esa/ffd

ACCRA, GHANA TO HOST AID EFFECTIVENESS MEETING IN 2008

The Monterrey Consensus asserted that “effective partnerships among donors and recipients are based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development plans and, within that framework, sound policies and good governance at all levels are necessary to ensure Official Development Assistance (ODA) effectiveness.” The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is a

milestone in setting out the principles and launching a process to achieve this mandate. These ongoing efforts should be intensified and lessons learnt, including those to be gathered from the outcome of the September 2008 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra, Ghana will serve as key inputs to the Follow on conference on Financing for Development in Doha later in 2008. Deliberations in the Development Cooperation Forum in July 2007 and in the summer 2008 and the High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development in the autumn of 2007 are key points in advancing the aid effectiveness agenda.



January 27, the day of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in 1945, has been designated by the UN as International Holocaust Remembrance Day to honour Holocaust victims.

UNITED NATIONS STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

We recognise that the Holocaust shook the foundations of modern

1. civilisation. Its unprecedented character and horror will always hold universal meaning.

2. We believe the Holocaust must have a permanent place in our nation's collective memory. We honour the survivors still with us, and reaffirm our shared goals of mutual understanding and justice.

3. We must make sure that future generations understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences. We vow to remember the victims of Nazi persecution and of all genocide.

4. We value the sacrifices of those who have risked their lives to protect or rescue victims, as a touchstone of the human capacity for good in the face of evil.

1. We recognise that humanity is still scarred by the belief that race, religion, disability or sexuality make some people's lives worth less than others'. Genocide, antisemitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination still continue. We have a shared responsibility to fight these evils.

2. We pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education and research about the Holocaust and other genocide. We will do our utmost to make sure that the lessons of such events are fully learnt.

We will continue to encourage Holocaust remembrance by holding an annual Holocaust Memorial Day. We condemn the evils of prejudice, discrimination and racism. We value a free, tolerant, and democratic society.

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

The members of the SVD and SSsP owe special gratitude to the last Executive Team of VIVAT International: Gretta Fernandes, SSsP and Bernard Espiritu, SVD. Gretta for her three years of dedication, insight and passion for VIVAT and Bernard for his year of service. May each of them find blessings, peace and hope in their new ministries.

WELCOME to Louise Nolta, SSsP and to Robert B Fisher, SVD the new members of the Ad Interim Executive Team.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE, 2 OCTOBER, 2007

The first International Day of Non-Violence was celebrated 2 October, 2007, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. This General Assembly resolution was passed on 15 June, 2007 and reaffirms “the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence” and the desire “to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence”.

The message of Mahatma Gandhi, whose peaceful struggle helped birth an independent India and inspired countless people around the world, is needed now more than ever amid rising global tensions, intolerance and conflict, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on 2 October. See <http://www.un.org/events/nonviolence/index.shtml>