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## “YOU CALL US THE FUTURE, BUT WE ARE ALSO THE PRESENT!”

*We are the world's children.  
We are the victims of exploitation and abuse.  
We are street children.  
We are the children of war.  
We are the victims and orphans of HIV/AIDS.  
We are denied good quality education and health care.  
We are victims of political, economic, cultural, religious and environmental discrimination.  
We are the children whose voices are not being heard:  
It is time that we are taken into account.  
We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone.*

(For the complete declaration go to [Http://www.un.org/ga/children/cfmE.htm](http://www.un.org/ga/children/cfmE.htm) )

These were voices of the child delegates under 18 years of age who participated in a Children's Forum that preceded the General Assembly Special Session on Children (GASSC), also called the Children's Summit, held May 8-10, at UN Headquarters in New York City. Almost 400 children took part in the three-day Forum. 240 child delegates then joined the government delegations to the GASSC. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan christened the GASSC "a gathering about the future of humanity." (Full text: <http://www.un.org/ga/children/sgopening.htm>)

### General Assembly Adopts Visionary Plan of Action for the World's Children

Concluding its three-day special session on children, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the declaration, *A World Fit For Children*, setting out goals and a specific plan of action to help millions of young people across the globe receive adequate education and health care and attain an adequate standard of living. The document was adopted without a vote, signaling that delegates had bridged their differences over sensitive lan-

guage in the text. Building on promises made at international conferences during the 1990s, the new document aims at lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty within a generation, while including new targets in the areas of HIV/AIDS and child protection, reflecting the changing nature of the challenges facing the world's children. (Final text is not yet out).

**SAY YES FOR CHILDREN!**  
*A public campaign that has been simultaneously taking place around the world alongside all formal preparatory processes leading to the GASSC.*

### HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART!

*The chance to act on behalf of children is only a click away. Log on to the website of the Global Movement for Children at [www.gmfc.org](http://www.gmfc.org) and register your support. Every young voice silenced by poverty, disease, war, abuse or discrimination is a call for your action*

## **CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)**

The CRC was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of November 20, 1989. It came into force on September 2, 1990 following the twentieth ratification. (Full text: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/44/a44r025.htm>)

The CRC recognizes the particular vulnerability of children and brings together, in one comprehensive code, benefits and protections for children concerning all categories of human rights. The CRC is the most broadly ratified treaty, with 191 States participating as of May 1998. The 2002 Children's Summit was an occasion for more countries to sign the CRC.

## **THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)**

UNICEF, the only UN organization dedicated exclusively to children, works for child protection, survival and development within the framework of the CRC. Created by the General Assembly in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe, UNICEF now supports programs aimed at improving the lives of children everywhere, particularly those in developing countries. It promotes the full implementation of the CRC.

Its present Executive Director, Ms. Carol Bellamy (USA) has become the effective catalyst in facilitating the series of mini summits at regional levels, which culminated in the Special Session (For more, log on to [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)). In her concluding remarks on behalf of the Secretary general, Kofi Annan, Ms Bellamy said that the child delegates captured the hearts and minds of the world's leaders who gathered to deliberate their future.

## **HISTORIC FIRST SESSION OF PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

The historic first session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from May 13 to 24, 2002. It was mandated to advise the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on issues of concern to indigenous people.

About 1000 indigenous peoples from all over the world—from the tropical forests of Amazonia and Central Africa, the Pacific Islands, East Africa, the Arctic, the Australian desert and the temperate regions of the Americas—Inuit, Tuareg, Saami, Maori, Mapuche, Igorots, Aboriginal people, Native Americans, Kuna and many others were registered to participate in this historic session. VIVAT International also participated as an observer in order to represent the thousands of Indigenous People (IP) whom our members serve in many countries.

The PFII elected Ole Henrik Magga (Norway) as its chairperson and Anotnia Jacanamijoy (Colombia), Njuma Ekundanayo (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Parshyram Tamang (Nepal) and Mililani Trask (United States) as its four vice-chairpersons.

Some of the crucial issues this session of PFII had to deal with, and which future sessions will have to address as well, were: discrimination, marginalization, violence, degradation of lands and issues related to self-determination.

On the first day, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Louise Frechette, pointed out that "The medicinal knowledge of indigenous peoples was of enormous value, and the world also had much to learn from them in managing complex ecosystems, promoting biodiversity, increasing crop productivity and conserving land." She also said that most of the human rights complaints indigenous people have relate to land and resource rights and were matters of life and death for many of them (UN press release HR/4589).

The Forum brought out a 'final report' entitled 'Matters Calling for Action by the Economic and Social Council or Brought to its Attention' (E/CN.19/2002/CRP.7 & 8). The main issues covered were related to: human rights, economic and social development, education and culture, environment, children and youth. The report also contains certain draft decisions

and matters for the attention of ECOSOC. It was decided to establish a permanent Secretariat for the Forum. The report also seeks to develop a United Nations publication once every three years on the status of the world's indigenous peoples.

At the end of the session, all felt that indigenous peoples had taken a step towards full and equal participation within the United Nations family. The Secretary General at the con-

cluding meeting of the first session said to all the world's indigenous peoples: "You have a home at the United Nations". (UN Press Release SG/SM/8249/HR/4603)

ECOSOC has decided to hold the second session of the PFI in the period April – May 2003 at the United Nations, New York. (For details on this historical session of PFI, log on to: <http://www.un.org/rights/indigenous/mediaadv.html>)

## WSSD PREPCOM IV, BALI, INDONESIA, May 27-June 7, 2002

The fourth session of the preparatory committee (PrepCom IV) for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Bali, Indonesia, on May 27-June 7. During the PrepCom, delegates came up with the 'Draft Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development' (A/CONF.199/PC/L.5). Even though the secretariat of WSSD had hoped for an agreed text by the end of the session, the negotiations on the draft remained incomplete. The delegates could not produce a consensus on key issues of the plan such as trade, finance, globalization and the Rio Principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Summit (WSSD) will be held at Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa from August 26 to Sept 4, 2002. (For more details log on to: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org), under 'sustainable development').

### VIVAT INTERNATIONAL

VI, an accredited NGO to the WSSD process, was fortunate to be represented at this PrepCom by two local members, Father Alexander Ganggu, SVD, and Sister Irmgardis Martha Olo, SSpS, from Indonesia. They were able to take their local experience to the global meeting and get enriched by government delegates and NGOs from all over the world. They had the following to say about their participation.

#### Fr. Alexander Ganggu, SVD, Indonesia:

"I made contributions in caucuses, side events and informal meetings, especially at those with NGOs from all over the world. These meetings were very open to any local experience and we could share our small experiences in the field. I must say, I learned much more than I could contribute. I met so many concerned-people' who talked about their successes and challenges. I was re-mo-

tivated and revitalized by listening to them. I got a global view of my own activities and involvement. I was inspired to hear the motivating words 'local initiatives move the world.' I was happy to see that the issue of ecology was a matter of global awareness and concern. However, I was struck most with the fact that all these discussions about 'saving the earth' excluded the role of God as creator."

#### Sister Irmgardis Martha Olo, SSpS, Indonesia:

"In the whole process, I saw most of the groups were working towards a good future: a clean environment, good governance, and clean water for all citizens. The Indigenous Peoples (IP) wanted the business people to respect their land and environment. I was able to contribute in the NGO Forum by joining the other NGOs speaking out against the Indonesian Government's plan to privatize water in Jakarta. I am grateful for this opportunity to see people from many nations acting like brothers and sisters in one building. I saw unity in diversity among people from north, south, among black and white. This meeting encouraged me to continue my task, especially in the matter of accompanying the rest of the East Timor refugees back to their own country."

VI has signed on to a petition, "An urgent appeal from workers in informal sector & labour rights defenders", promoted by the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW). The petition will be submitted to the ILO, UN WTO and other international institutions. As of 05/03/02 more than 64000 signatures were obtained to support IYCW's demands. (More details in: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org), under WSSD and Beyond)

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 2002

The Economic and Social Council is one of the main bodies of the UN system and it coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, ten functional commissions, five regional commissions, and numerous other committees and expert bodies. It receives reports from eleven UN funds and programs and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to Member States. One of its main functions is to consult with non-governmental organizations.

This year, as a preparation for the substantive session to be held in UN headquarters, New York, from July 1-24, 2002, ECOSOC had two consultations with NGOs:

1. NGO Consultation on the Strengthening of ECOSOC. This was held by the NGO Section of ECOSOC in collaboration with CONGO (Conference of NGOs) on June 6, mainly on the topic: "Strengthening further

the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfill the role ascribed to it in ... the United Nations Millennium Declaration."

2. NGO Forum on the High Level Segment of ECOSOC: This was held on June 14. The morning featured a seminar and consultation for the purpose of reviewing and commenting on the draft Ministerial Declaration for the High Level Segment of ECOSOC. The theme for 2002 is: "The contribution of human resources development, including the area of health and education, to the process of development."

Lawrence Correa participated in both the events as representative of VIVAT International and associate of Franciscans International. (More information on ECOSOC is available on the ECOSOC website: [www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc)).

### *FOLLOW-UP TO UN FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE:*

Lawrence Correa attended a special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with Bretton Woods institutions held on April 22, 2002. (<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/bwi.htm>)

VIVAT International signed a petition to Mr. Gordon Brown, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister), initiated by BOND – Networking for International Development, urging him to set a timetable for meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNP for Overseas Development Assistance. VI with other NGOs believes that if the UK Government commits to a timetable on issues such as child poverty, debt relief and aid, it will serve as an example to other rich nations.

### *GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE*

In recognition of the efforts and activities of VI towards the promotion of peace the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), on February 20, registered VI as an organization to take part in the Global Movement for a Culture of Peace. On May 20 VI sent an appeal to all its members and the people associated with them, through the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Coordinators, to participate in this movement by signing on to Manifesto 2000 and by organizing activities and programs to promote peace. VI once again appeals to all its members to actively participate in this project and encourage others to do the same.

### *UPCOMING UN EVENTS*

- 21-24 July, New York: Economic and Social Council: Substantive session of 2002 ([www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc))
- 26 Aug-Sept 4: UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Johannesburg, S. A. (<http://www.johannesburgsummit.org>)
- 9-11 Sept, New York: 55<sup>th</sup> DPI/NGO Conference (Rebuilding Societies Emerging from Conflict: A Shared Responsibility) (<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/55conf.htm>)