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EDUCATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Education is not an end in itself. It is a key instrument for bringing about the changes in the knowledge, values, behaviours and lifestyles required to achieve sustainability and stability within and among countries, democracy, human security and peace.

–UNESCO

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August to 4 September 2002. Attending delegates focused on the implementation of *Agenda 21*, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and tried to move forward to complement the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Underlying the Earth Summit agreements is the idea that humanity has reached a turning point. We cannot continue with present policies which are deepening economic divisions within and between countries and which further increase poverty, hunger, sickness and illiteracy and cause the continuing deterioration of the ecosystem on which life on Earth depends. *Agenda 21* contains over 2,500 wide ranging recommendations for action, including detailed proposals for how to reduce wasteful consumption, combat poverty, protect the atmosphere and oceans, protect biodiversity and promote sustainable agriculture.

Over ten years have passed since the term “sustainable development” was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in its 1987 report entitled *Our Common Future*, which took up key issues to ensure that development was sustainable, that is, that it would satisfy “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Agenda 21 proposed various means of implementation. At the top of the list were financial resources and mechanisms, national mechanisms, and international cooperation for capacity building and the transfer of environmentally sound technology. *Agenda 21* also included two other significant means: Science and Sustainable Development (Ch 35) and Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training (Ch 36).

The Special Session of the General Assembly held in June 1997 recognized *education accessible to all* as a decisive factor in enabling people to become productive and responsible members of society, and as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. The core themes of education for sustainability include lifelong learning, interdisciplinary education, partnerships, multicultural education and empowerment. A new vision of education for a sustainable future requires

THE GLOBAL EDUCATION CRISIS

Some 125 million children, the majority of them girls, are not enrolled in primary school. That is one in five children in the world out of school. One in three children – one in every two in Africa – never finish primary school. The others, should they be born in a poor country, are likely to attend school in an environment where classes are very large, textbooks scarce, and teachers poorly trained. All of these children are being denied the knowledge, self-confidence and skills that they need to secure a better future for themselves and their children. Concentrated poverty and illiteracy provide a fertile breeding ground for extremism.

reorientation of traditional approaches, ensuring the training of teachers and youth leaders, and the participation of a wide spectrum of sectors.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been mandated as the task manager for this. UNESCO, whose constitution has been in effect since 1946, and which currently has 188 Member States, has taken the task seriously, with all its gigantic global challenges, in order to implement the theme of Education and Public Awareness as indispensable for sustainable development.

(<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/edu.htm>)

EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA)

Two years ago at the World Education Forum in Dakar, 180 Governments, with UNESCO and the World Bank, made a commitment to launch a “global initiative” to provide *Education for All* by 2015, and endorsed the principle that “no country seriously committed to EFA will be thwarted in their achievements of this goal by lack of resources.” They made a further commitment to see that an equal number of girls to boys are in school by 2005. “Millions of parents, teachers and children across the globe have called on their Governments to provide free, high-quality, basic education for all the world’s children.

They are part of the Global Campaign for Education; we add our voices to their call.” (Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel, April 2002.)

For more information log on to:
<http://www.campaignforeducation.org>

One of 25 modules in UNESCO’s multimedia teacher education programme is entitled Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future. The following are some of its salient principles:

- 1. Thinking about the future** “We are beginning to move towards a new global ethic which transcends all other systems of allegiance and belief, which is rooted in the consciousness of the interrelatedness and sanctity of life. Would such a common ethic have the power to motivate us to modify our current dangerous course?”
- 2. Thinking about forever** “Educating for a sustainable future is not so much about a destination as about the process of learning to make decisions that consider the long-term economy, ecology and equity of all communities. Its goal is to build an enduring society. Individuals and societies will perpetually have to make choices. How those choices are made and the information and ethical discernment used in making them will determine whether our visions of a sustainable future are achieved.”
- 3. A dynamic balance** “It requires a dynamic balance among four dimensions and principles that underlie a sustainable future: ecological, social, economic, and political sustainability. It requires a dynamic balance of four related value principles: peace and equity, conservation, appropriate development, and democracy. These principles mean that a sustainable future would be one in which people:
 - Ø Care for each other and value social justice and peace
 - Ø Protect natural systems and use resources wisely
 - Ø Value appropriate development and satisfying livelihoods for all
 - Ø Make decisions through fair and democratic means”

(available on-line, <http://portal.unesco.org>)

VIVAT International and Educating for Sustainability

Thousands of VI members are directly or indirectly involved in formal and informal education. As partners of UNESCO in so many parts of the world, VI can join forces with teachers, students and parents to look seriously not only into revamping the school curricula, but also into the methods of teaching and learning that are congruent with educating for sustainability. The whole of our pedagogy could be geared towards the focus issues: poverty eradication, women, sustainable development and culture of peace, taking human rights as the fundamental and over-arching theme. VI can support Education for All (EFA) and commit more strongly to reducing illiteracy among children living in poverty and to ensuring that young girls receive the same opportunities as boys. This is a challenging process that can be motivated with the conviction that “education is not an end in itself but a key instrument in bringing about changes required to achieve sustainability.”

“FIGHTING AIDS: A NEW GLOBAL RESOLVE”

This was the theme of the XIV International AIDS Conference, held in Barcelona, 7-12 July 2002. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's message was delivered by Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director at the opening ceremony : “This conference brings together the world's best thinkers on AIDS, the most resolute decision makers and the most trenchant activists. I hope you will take the power of your vision to convey to every community on the planet and to every leader of every country. I will join with you and do my utmost to ensure that our reply to this epidemic is urgent, comprehensive and determined.” (www.unaids.org/whatsnew/speeches/eng/2002/)

The Conference endorsed the World Aids Campaign 2002-2003 with its theme, *Stigma and Discrimination: Live and Let Live*. With the focus on stigma and discrimination, the Campaign will encourage people to break the silence and the barriers to effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

Current HIV/AIDS Estimates

Geographical Distribution

Sub-Saharan Africa	28,500,000
South/South-East Asia	5,600,000
Latin America	1,500,000
East Asia & Pacific	1,000,000
Eastern Europe/Central Asia	1,000,000

North America	950,000	Western
Europe	550,000	
North Africa & Middle East	500,000	
Caribbean	420,000	
Australia & New Zealand	15,000	

Number of people living with HIV/AIDS

Total	40 million
Adults	37,100,000
Women	18,500,000
Children	3,000,000

People newly affected with HIV in 2001

Total	5 million
Adults	4,200,000
Women	2,000,000
Children	800 000

AIDS deaths in 2001

Total	3 million
Adults	2,400,000
Women	1,100,000
Children	580,000

Total number of children orphaned by AIDS, and living at end of 2001

14 million

Children are defined as from age 0 – 14
Orphaned by AIDS means having lost one or both parents to AIDS.

(<http://www.unaids.org/wac/2002/index.html> For more information on the World AIDS Campaign or to order materials: UNAIDS, Geneva: email: doupea@unaids.org).

A CALL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

VIVAT International (VI) is participating in the Global Movement for Culture of Peace (GMCP) (www.unesco.org/iycp) All members of VIVAT are urged to promote the GMCP by signing on to Manifesto 2000 and by encouraging others to do the same. In doing so, please be aware that VI has accepted to comply with the content of the Ethical Charter for participation in the Culture of Peace websites.

How to sign on to Manifesto 2000

Go to the website ww3.unesco.org/manifesto2000/. Click on “**Manifesto**” in the language you prefer. Click “**sign it.**” Fill in the data requested and click “**I send my signature.**” You will be asked for your personal Internet Account Number (IAN). Fill in: **NGO/USA/093/QOY**. That is the IAN of VIVAT International. If you have email and wish to receive information, indicate your email address. Finally, click **CONTINUE** to end the process of signing. You can print out your MANIFESTO 2000 Certificate.

VINY ACTIVITIES

24 June 2002 Carmen Castro addressed the 12th SSpS General Chapter, presenting the progress made and the challenges that VIVAT International has been facing since its foundation. She addressed the process of application for accreditation to the UN-ECOSOC, clarified the relationship of VINY and the JPIC Coordinators, and presented the results of the Survey Questionnaire that involved the VI membership regarding the choices of four overarching issues that VI will focus on in the coming six years.

3 July 2002 As Chair of the NGO Committee on Social Development and as representative of the Franciscans International, Lawrence Correa participated in the breakfast round table of the High Level Segment of the ECOSOC Substantive Session of 2002 on the theme, "Education for Poverty Eradication: an approach to human resources development". On July 5, Lawrence read out a statement on behalf of the NGO Committee, on the theme: "The Contribution of Human Resources Development, including areas of health and education, to the process of development." His intervention focused on education for all (EFA), with emphasis on education for girls, the need to reduce military spending to provide funds for education; arms surrendering programs linked to capacity building, education and job opportunities especially in African countries; urging policy makers, developed countries and Bretton Woods institutions not to pressure the developing countries to withdraw subsidies for education and health as part of liberalization and structural adjustment processes; the need to increase the Official Development Assistance (ODA); and the need to cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

VIVAT International signed two statements submitted to the substantive session of ECOSOC held in the UN Headquarters, New York from July 1-24, 2002:

- NGO Position on Debt of Developing Countries, prepared by Demba Moussa Dembele, Forum for African Alternatives
- Concrete Actions Needed for Sustained Financing for Development Follow-up, prepared by EVA/CIDSE.

(See www.vivatinternational.org under Financing for Development)

Carmen's presentation at the SSpS General Chapter received an enthusiastic response that resulted in a corporate statement, *STAND FOR LIFE*, with a commitment to take an active role in upholding the rights and values related to LIFE from conception to natural death; to oppose all activities which are against human life and Christian values such as abortion, euthanasia, cloning and other experimentations that diminish the expression of human life; to work for the dignity and empowerment of women especially those living in poverty and in difficult circumstances; and as a priority for the coming six years (2002-2008) to work for people living with HIV/AIDS especially in Africa. 121 signatures were affixed by the participants.

VINY expresses its appreciation and wishes all signatories the courage and strength to carry out the commitments expressed.

6 July 2002* The VIVAT International Board of Directors Meeting was held in Nemi, Rome. Carmen Castro participated. Among other things taken up and approved was the VINY recommendations of the four issues of focus for the next 6 years: poverty eradication, women, sustainable development and culture of peace. Human Rights is to be the umbrella issue.

26 Aug-4 Sept. VIVAT International at the WSSD, Johannesburg: The UN WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 26 to September 4, 2002. NGO representatives met in a parallel event, The Global Forum of the World Summit on Sustainable Development from 19 Aug-4 Sept. VIVAT International, received accreditation and participated with a team of four: Lawrence Correa SVD from New York, Mick Seigel SVD from Japan, Marie Jose Garcia SSpS and Thomas Nelluvely SVD, both from Botswana. More will be presented on this event in the next newsletter.

(For more information on UNWSSD and Global Forum of WSSD see www.vivatinternational.org under Sustainable Development)