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LATIN AMERICAN/CARIBBEAN TRAINING AND CONFERENCE PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA

The Latin American/Caribbean Conference (LACC) begins an ongoing process to promote partnership among UN, countries, the private sector, donors and civil society, especially NGO's towards the establishment of sustainable programs and projects to implement the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)

Latin America is in the midst of major political, social and institutional transformations associated with democratization and accelerated globalization. Regional networks of civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean are emerging as key actors in this process; many NGO's in Latin America have actively participated and continue to participate in various UN conferences, although a lack of access to training and resources hinders their advocacy efforts.

*In this context, the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) at the UN is organizing a training conference which was originally planned for November 10 to 15, 2003 in Santiago, Chile but re-scheduled for March 8 - 12, 2004 for some unforeseen reasons. **The goals of this training conference are:***

- 1. To provide a space for innovation and partnership among NGOs, foundations, private sector, public sector, academics, parliamentarians, regional offices of the UN system and the UN itself*
- 2. To train teams and NGOs to become partners with the UN system*
- 3. To bring NGO representatives into implementation strategies for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*

- 4. To create a network of development organizations working in the region who can give voice to their constituency when decisions are being made at the regional and global level.*

Among others, the following components will be covered: UN/NGO relationship, Communication for Empowerment, Leadership Development, Developing your NGO, UN Millennium Development Goals, the Role of Private Sectors in Civil Society, Information Communication Technologies, Eradication of Poverty, Education, Environment & Sustainable Development, Social Development, Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women, Health (Incl. HIV/AIDS) www.ngocongo.org

With regard to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, the success of VIVAT International, in partnership with the UN, lies in the active involvement of its members on the ground. Through this CONGO conference and training, we hope to set up a TEAM as a CONTINENTAL CONTACT POINT for Pan America.

Formation and development are crucial to forge a more active and productive involvement of VIVAT International members in Justice and Peace endeavors and in the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals in the local,

national and global levels. Seeing this training and conference as a venue for this purpose VIVAT International has extended the invitation to the members from the PAN AMERICAN ZONE.

SVD-SSpS COLLABORATION: an Essential Element in the Pursuit of VIVAT International

The submission of our application for ECOSOC accreditation in April 2003 marks a new beginning in our partnership with the UN in the attainment of its Millennium Development Goals. To carry on this partnership, we need to forge a more active and effective collaboration and networking among the members of VIVAT International, SVD and SSpS, at all levels: provincial/regional, continental and global. To this effect, the SVD-SSpS Councils in their joint meeting on July 19, 2003 agreed to promote collaboration between SVD and SSpS by means of the following:

- The topic on collaboration between the SVD and SSpS will always be brought up and given emphasis during every visit and visitation by the SVD and the SSpS general administration and during every assembly of the members of both congregations.
- In the provinces / regions that do not yet have a JPIC coordinator, a member of the provincial / regional administration

could take the role of JPIC coordinator and serve as the contact person with VIVAT International Executive Team in New York. With the cooperation of the provincial / regional administrations of both congregations, especially with regards to zonal JPIC meetings and assemblies, collaboration on the ground level could be better promoted.

The challenge of SVD-SSpS collaboration is inherent in VIVAT International and could be traced back to our foundation as Arnoldus family. This was aptly pointed out by Fr. Antonio Pernia in his address to the SSpS 12th General Chapter. In conclusion he said: *“The origin of our religious missionary family was the collaboration of the Founder, the co-Foundresses and the rest of the Founding generation. We, who are members of the congregations they founded, cannot do less than continue this spirit of collaboration among ourselves.”*

***“Since wars begin in the minds of men,
it is in the minds of men that defenses of peace must be constructed”***

Constitution of UNESCO, 1945

The best way to reach the minds of peoples of different races, cultures and religions is PRAYER. In this spirit, we appeal to our VIVAT International membership spread all over the world in communities and different ministries **TO JOIN THE 24-HOUR VIGIL**

FOR PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE, Sunday, September 21, 2003. To link your commitment and endeavors for peace with the rest of the world, please visit <http://www.idpvigil.com>

Update on ECOSOC Accreditation

On July 17, 2003 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) DESA NGO Section scrutinized VIVAT International’s application for accreditation to ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) of the UN, submitted on April 11, 2003. Necessary changes suggested by this Section were incorporated and the application was resubmitted on the same day. It will now be sent to the Governments for further study.

VIVAT International, New York acknowledges with gratitude the projects sent by our members on the ground:

POVERTY ERADICATION

Brazil North: The SSpS Sisters started a project dubbed as “Association of Friends” in 1979. It is geared towards poverty alleviation, defense of human rights and promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation among landless laborers, poor families and women (Norma Kerber, SSpS).

Another project in the periphery of Goiania, Brazil was opened in March 2000 aimed at reducing poverty among the people. Specifically, the program takes care of 70 children, giving them food assistance and conducting orientations in health and nutrition to the mothers (Elena Busato, SSpS).

Kenya: Through a project called “Catholic Mission’s Participatory Activities among Poor Families and Children in Africa,” Brother Andre Hotchkiss, SVD worked towards the empowerment of 4,000 people belonging to the Boran Tribe in Garba Tulla, Kenya.

Mozambique: The SSpS community in Maputo made a commitment to make water available to travelers who pass by the Sisters’ convent. Moreover, they have also started a partnership with the Catholic Community of the Parish of St. Carlos Lwanga in their ministry with people living with HIV/AIDS (Teresita Riedel, SSpS)

WOMEN

Ethiopia. In collaboration with the Catholic Mission through GMA, an Italian Funding Agency, the SSpS launched a project on Women Empowerment - Gender Mainstreaming in Badessa. (Benegilda Ladia, SSpS)

CULTURE OF PEACE

Flores West, Indonesia: In response to the situation of war and violence in the area, the SSpS in Dalo, Flores West have embarked on a program on reconciliation through cultural dialogue between tribes (Margareta Wigberta Ninu, SSpS). Furthermore, the SVD and SSpS in the same province have also launched a common project/program for the promotion of justice, peace and integrity of creation. (Norbert Betan, SVD).

Brazil North: The SSpS Sisters in São Paulo Brazil have begun to organize people living in extreme poverty, especially those who are living in plastic houses in a land they do not own. Their involvement with them is geared towards helping them to develop a sense of human dignity, and empower them towards greater participation, communication and dialogue. As a result, the people have started to take active part in public endeavors for justice and peace like the “Cry of the Oppressed” and the “Walk for Peace” (Maria Christian, SSpS).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Netherlands: In the spirit of this year’s International Year of Water, the SVDs in the Netherlands have been very active in sending letters to the Dutch government and to the Dutch delegation to the World Water Forum. Moreover, together with the SSpS in the same country (as forwarded to VIVAT International, New York) they also sent letters to the G8 leaders urging them to cancel the debt of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in their recent summit in Evian, France (Toon van Bijnen and Imaria Niessen, SSpS).

HUMAN RIGHTS

Madagascar: In a project named “Human Rights in connection with the Integrity of Creation,” the SVD in Madagascar accompany people living in poverty to move towards total development, believing that this is their human right (Zacharias Lusi Ujan, SVD).

SVD/SSpS Euro Zone JPIC Coordinators Conference

Lawrence Correa from VIVAT International (VI) is invited to take part in the SVD/SSpS Euro zone JPIC Coordinators Conference, to be held from September 7 – 14, 2003 in Maynooth, Ireland. The theme of the Conference is: Poverty Reduction through Insolvency Right for Impoverished States, Spiritual Renewal as a Key to a Needed Change, and Debt Crises and Debt Relief. He will specifically speak on “The Practice of Insolvency Right in some States, and JPIC Activities of VI”. VI sees this as a golden opportunity to establish better relationships between VI and JPIC Coordinators in the Euro zone. Their concerns, particularly in regard to poverty eradication and debt relief, need to be addressed by VI to the UN as concerns of our Congregations.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty was launched on July 8, 2003. This report mainly concentrates on the poverty situation in various countries and how the states/nations could achieve the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs) to reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and gradually eliminate human poverty. It would be helpful to VIVAT International members, who are committed to collaborate with other NGOs and Governments in reducing poverty in their village, town, city, district etc., to read this report. It is freely available for downloading at: <http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/>. The Human Development Report is an independent report. It is commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is the product of a selected team of leading scholars, development practitioners and members of the Human Development Report Office of UNDP.

On July 1, 2003 “the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families” entered into force as an instrument of international law and one of the seven core international human rights instruments that will ensure protection and respect for the human rights of all migrants.

Indigenous Peoples, particularly in relation to Women, and from the Perspective of Poverty Eradication

In the light of our partnership with the UN and our commitment to the most vulnerable in societies and in the world, VIVAT International (VI) has chosen to follow-up the issues of Indigenous Peoples (IP), particularly in relation to women, and from the perspective of poverty eradication at the UN. VI Central Office in New York firmly believes this can be done only through the active participation and cooperation of VI members all over the world. Bearing this in mind, VI Central Office has sent you a write-up and sample petitions, through Provincial/Regional JPIC Coordinators and Provincial/ Regional Superiors, explaining how VI members could contribute to the process, network with other NGOs, lobby IP ministries and Head of States, and send project reports to VI Central Office for active intervention in UN assemblies and in the Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, May 2004. VI looks forward to your wholehearted cooperation.

September Major UN Events

56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference

September 8-10, 2003 Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations Web address:

<http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/56conf.htm>

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