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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN (LAC) SEMINAR, 2004, CHILE

The Latin American and Caribbean Seminar, organized by the Conference of NGOs (CONGO), UN was held in Santiago, Chile from June 1-4, 2004. The purpose of the LAC Seminar was to facilitate dialogue, capacity building and partnerships between public and private sector organizations towards the establishment of sustainable programs to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in LAC. There were about 130 participants and 40 presenters.

Four VIVAT International (VI) members, Maria Salome Labra Madariaga, SSpS (Province Leader of Chile) and José Fernando Díaz Fernandes, SVD from Chile, Sebastiao Kiwonghi Bizawu, SVD from Brazil, and Adelia Mercedes Gette, SSpS from Argentina participated in this seminar.

The VI participants are hoping to collaborate and participate in the 'Plan of Action for Latin America and the Caribbean' that came out of this seminar under the leadership of CONGO. Among other things, this Plan of Action has highlighted some of the specific actions that need to be taken to achieve the MDGs in LAC. They are: the need for Governments to include MDGs in their plans, and NGOs and the private sector to be given an active role in planning and implementing actions to achieve those goals; diffusing information about and the need for achieving the MDGs at all levels of the society using social mass media; generating a proactive approach towards development; addressing HIV/AIDS, the greatest threat to the success of MDGs; recognizing the importance of preserving cultural harmony, especially of the Indigenous Peoples; giving greater importance to education and

making the families and the community participate in the promotion of the education sector; and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

Sebastiao Kiwonghi Bizawu, SVD sent to the Central Office, New York a small report of his participation in the Seminar and the plan being evolved among VI participants and members in LAC. He was very happy that he was able to participate in this Seminar. It helped him to meet and interact with so many people who are engaged in social projects and programs, to understand better the functioning of NGOs and the MDGs, and their relationship to the objectives of VI and his apostolate. He participated in the group that discussed "Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger." Sebastiao is going to work for a better diffusion of objectives and information in his SVD Province, as he thinks very little is known about MDGs and their importance and relationship to the SVD apostolates. The participants of Brazil are planning to have an encounter in this regard. **Sebastiao says "...what I can do is to spread better the information about the objectives of MDGs to the SVDs in order to help them develop activities related to MDGs in their parishes and communities. I also plan to participate in Brazilian President Lula's Government program related to MDGs called 'Hunger Zero'".**

The CONGO Plan of Action and Sebastiao Bizawu, SVD's report, both in Spanish, and the highlights of the CONGO Plan of Action in English can be found in: www.vivatinternational.org, under 'Poverty Eradication', → 'MDGs'.

**THE THIRD SESSION OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (PFII3),
UN, NEW YORK, MAY 10-21, 2004**

The Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII3), on the theme “Indigenous Women”, brought together over 1500 participants from more than 500 indigenous groups worldwide. Its ultimate aim was to draw up recommendations for the UN system, based on discussions in its mandated areas of economic and social development, environment, health, human rights, culture and education. The main areas of proposed action related to security and prevention of violence against indigenous women, their role in conflict resolution, education, information, and participation in decision-making and health, including HIV/AIDS and reproductive issues.

Marie Angela Risi, SSpS from USA, Esperanza Pilar Chagoya Minguier, SSpS from Mexico, Eva Del Carmen Tapia Torres, SSpS from Chile, and Lawrence Correa, SVD from India participated in this Forum, partially. For documents, statements, and press releases on PFII3 in English and Spanish

please visit:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/news/news_1.htm

Eva Del Carmen Tapia Torres, SSpS from Chile was happy that so many Indigenous groups and people, in their traditional clothes, came for this Forum and discussed and presented their problems at the UN. She felt that the participating Indigenous People, especially women, were conscious of their problems and had come prepared for this Forum. Of course, she had some questions in her mind as regards what is being done regarding their issues and problems and the extent of VI members’ involvement in these processes.

In the future, once VI obtains accreditation with the ECOSOC of the UN, we may have to organize to bring the Indigenous People, with whom we are working, to participate in these Forums, and to present their issues, problems and possible solutions.

FIRST SUBSTANTIAL SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AN INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND TRACING OF ILLICIT SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (OEWG), JUNE 14-25, 2004

VI participated in OEWG held at UN headquarters, New York, on an ad hoc accreditation basis. A broad majority of Member States voiced their support for a comprehensive approach to marking and tracing nationally, regionally and internationally. Most delegates wanted the new international instrument to be legally binding. These, and the NGOs that support this instrument believe that it will help reduce illegal weapons and their use that kill

thousands of innocent people all over the world. VI, together with these NGOs, particularly IANSA (International Action Network on Small Arms), a NGO network, believes that this is essential towards building a world where there is peace. More information on OEWG can be found at: www.vivatinternational.org, under ‘culture of peace’ → ‘Disarmament and Small Arms’.

THE COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC), UN RECOMMENDED VIVAT INTERNATIONAL FOR SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC ON MAY 26, 2004. THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY ECOSOC IN THEIR SESSION IN JULY 2004

REPORTS OF VI ACTIVITIES FROM THE FIELD

VIVAT International's Service to the Mamanuas in the Philippines

The SSpS of south Philippines are actively involved in helping the Mamanuas, who are local Indigenous People (IP) in the mountainous area in Sitio Palilihan, Barangay Mahanub, Municipality of Gigaquit, Province of Surigao del Norte - a recent IP (Indigenous People) settlement put in place to facilitate the Mamanuas to avail themselves of basic services provided by the government. The Sisters mainly help these IPs by giving them emotional

support and teaching them to make handicrafts. Some times, together with these IPs they become victims of cross fire between Armed Forces of the Philippines and the rebel New People's Army. The Mamanuas are still victims of conquests and conflicts, as well as resource robberies and yet they are determined to claim back their lost rights. (*From the joint JPIC newsletter of SVD & SSpS, Philippines South, March – April 2004*)

VIVAT International's work among Mapuche in Chile

SVDs are supporting the Indigenous People called 'Mapuche' around Temuco City in south Chile to regain their self-esteem, religion, culture and autonomy by collaborating with various leaders and Indigenous organizations. Jose Fernando Dias Fernandez, SVD says that they are very poor and discriminated. Mapuche migrate to cities in search of

jobs without qualifications. The SVDs are in the process of expanding these activities in Santiago due to the strong presence of Mapuche in that city, and also to other parts of south Chile and south Argentina where there are many Indigenous communities. (*As e-mail attachment from Jose Fernando Dias Fernandez, April 29, 2004*)

Reports from Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Zelia Cordeiro, SSpS sent us two reports on June 5 and 21, respectively: One, "In the Struggle against HIV/AIDS" written by her, and the other, "Facing a Culture of Violence in Papua New Guinea" written by Philip Gibbs, SVD and her.

Zelia says, "It (HIV/AIDS) ...tends to bring out the best and worst in people. It triggers the best when individuals group together in solidarity to combat government, community and individual denial and to offer support and care to people living with HIV/AIDS."

In the Struggle against HIV/AIDS is the report she wrote as a result of the exposure trip to some African countries, namely, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia and Uganda, organized by Sharon Walker the adviser for counseling and care in the National HIV/AIDS support project in conjunction with the National AIDS Council of PNG. Tarcisia Hunhoff, SSpS and Zelia Cordeiro, SSpS were part of the team. This exposure trip was to find answers to the increasing cases of HIV/AIDS in PNG, the first case being diagnosed in 1987. She concludes her report saying, "All over the world, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is

having a profound impact. It also tends to bring out the best and worst in people. It triggers the best when individuals group together in solidarity to combat government, community and individual denial and to offer support and care to people living with HIV/AIDS. A good example of this is the TASO drama group with its program that brings people who are HIV positive to share their life's story through media of music, dance and drama. The drama group is a practical and creative way of promoting awareness throughout the country says Charles Makanga, TASO drama group chairman.

Initiatives like the TASO drama group could serve as a model for further awareness programs here in Papua New Guinea.” Complete write-up on:

www.vivatinternational.org, under women → HIV/AIDS.

Facing a Culture of Violence in Papua New Guinea concentrates on the ‘culture of violence’ prevailing in PNG, the efforts of the Catholics, particularly the Catholic Bishops Conference of PNG and the Solomon Islands’ call to all the Catholics throughout PNG to give support to efforts aimed at ridding society of firearms and of reducing lawlessness, and the initiatives and programs of the SVDs and the SSpS in promoting a culture of peace, harmony and reconciliation. The report specifically mentions two projects/programs: One, the opening of the first AIDS counseling, testing and day care

center in Madang on June 18, 2004. The center is an initiative of the Diocese of Madang, lead by Bishop William Kurtz, SVD and supported by the National Catholic HIV/AIDS Coordinator, Tarcisia Hunhoff, SSpS. The project is the result of the combined financial support of the Catholic Church and the Government. The other project is the weeklong workshop the SVDs will be hosting, entitled, “Responses to Violence”. Full report on: www.vivatinternational.org, under ‘culture of peace’ → ‘Disarmament and Small Arms’.

VI members opened the first AIDS counseling, testing and day care center in Madang, Papua New Guinea on June 18, 2004. It is a combined project of VI members and the Government of PNG.

VIVAT International’s Contribution to the Development of Afro-Americans in South USA

In June 2004, Lawrence Correa, SVD from the Executive Team visited SVDs working in Mississippi and Louisiana. The most significant and visible contribution of the members of the Society of the Divine Word (SVDs) and Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) for more than 50 years in these areas has been working towards racial harmony and peace, and the development of Afro-Americans. **Education of the Afro-Americans and promotion of leadership from among them affecting all spheres of life have been the hallmark of the work of SVDs and the SSpS.** Currently, the SVDs are trying to address the needs of new groups and communities also, namely the Latinos and the Vietnamese that need special attention. On June 9,

2004 Lawrence addressed 50 SVDs, including Provincial Superior, Joseph Simon, SVD in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi and discussed ways to enhance collaboration between them and the Executive Team in relation to VI activities in their parishes and communities.

James Pawlicki, SVD, the director of Media Production Center (MPC) in Bay St. Louis is looking for ways to disseminate information about VI through this Center, for instance by linking VI website to the website of MPC, and studying the possibilities of helping us improve the communication system.

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