

51st SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF STATUS OF WOMEN

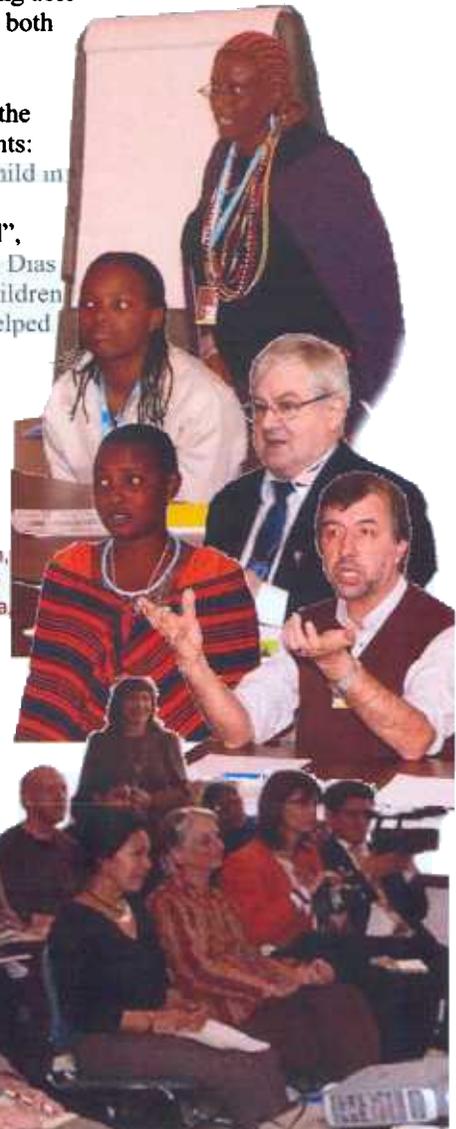
The Fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was focused around the overall theme, "Elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl-child." The governments deliberated on this theme through a series of high-level roundtables and expert panels. These discussions focused on a few key points related to eliminating discrimination and violence against the girl child through examining key policy initiatives; capacity building on mainstreaming a gender perspective in development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programs; following up with the Secretary General's in depth study of this at national and international levels; and progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Some of the agreed conclusions reached in the outcome document for this Session (which can be accessed at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw51/pdfs/CSW51_agreed%20conclusions_ADVANCED%20UNEDITED%20VERSION.pdf) highlight the importance of

the governments to not only enforce the policies and declarations that have already been instituted to eliminate violence and discrimination towards the girl child, but also to include the gender perspective into the creation of new policies. The focus in the poverty agenda of the agreed conclusions was the idea that the girl child often experiences the most vulnerability in the schema of poverty, due to drastic inequalities she constantly faces—even her basic needs such as food and water are often prioritized towards the male child in the family. This transfers over to access to education, so the agreed conclusions underscore the need for implementation of policies which not only provide girls with the opportunity for equal access to formal education but also to implement programs which can advance their non-formal learning. This is to assist in the girls achieving their fullest potential by being able to contribute to all aspects of decision-making, both at home and in the larger world.

VIVAT contributed to the fifty first session of the CSW through participation in a number of events: organized a parallel event entitled "The Girl Child in the Indigenous Communities: Violence, Vulnerability and a Constructive Way Forward", with contributions by VIVAT member Arlindo Dias Pereira on his work among the street people/children in São Paulo, Brazil. VIVAT Intern Stefanie helped to coordinate girls' participation at CSW by taking part in the task group, which organized the Girls Orientation, Speak OUT and Girls Caucus throughout two weeks.

The Participants and the Panelist for the Side event organized by VIVAT International with the NGO Committee for Indigenous People, Tribal Link foundation, & The Sisters of the Good Shepherd. The Speakers were Arlindo Pereira, Mary Simat, and a Maasai from Tanzania and one from Kenya. Kevin Dance was the moderator. Pictures compliment of Miguel Ibanez of Tribal Link.





PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On February 26 to March 2, 2007, an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the Fifteen Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was held at the United Nations. It gathered the 48 Member States who are members of CSD, UN Officials, Civil Societies' delegates, and representatives of private and public stakeholders. The body was welcomed by the Chairman of the 15th Session of the Commission, Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah of Qatar who delivered the Introductory Statement.

The agenda was directed to the upcoming development of policy options and actions to expedite the implementation of the following: Energy for sustainable

development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution / Atmosphere, and Climate Change.

This Preparatory Meeting reaffirmed the many decisions of past resolutions and declarations held over the years in meetings like Rio, Johannesburg, Monterrey, Barbados, and Mauritius. Reaffirming these declarations that promote sustainable developments, the gathered body underlined the continuous need to balance economic development, social development and environmental protection. No doubt that these are interdependent and are the mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development.

This Preparatory Meeting was able to identify obstacles and constrains, as well as lessons learned and best practices in implementing the thematic cluster of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution /atmosphere and climate change.

Detailed report on the Preparatory Meeting may be found in the CSD online: *What's New* section http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/csd15_ipm.htm . The 15th Session of the CSD will be held on 30 April until 11 May 2007, at the UN Headquarters in New York. This is a policy year of the CSD.

Financing for Development

The United Nations hosted on the 16th day of April 2007 the Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The NGOs with special affiliation to the ECOSOC, and the private sectors also actively participated in the meeting. The theme of this 10th Annual Spring Meeting was **“Coherence, Coordination and Cooperation in the Context of the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus”**

The honorable President of ECOSOC, Dalius Čekuolis, who is the Permanent Ambassador to the UN from Lithuania welcomed the assembly. H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN and H.E. Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, the President of the General Assembly

both gave their statements. This was followed by a panel of representatives from WTO, IMF, WB, and UNCTAD. The assembly then broke up into four round table discussions. Each round table group had a sub theme as focus of discussion. These were (1) Good governance at all levels; (2) Voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, including the Bretton Woods institutions; (3) Realizing the Doha development agenda – effective use of trade and investment policies; and (4) Aid effectiveness and innovative financing for development. The designated NGOs who attended the FfD Civil Society Forum that took place the previous day were given the opportunity to make their interventions. Like the member state delegates, each NGO representative was given three minutes to speak.

It was strongly expressed in the Spring Meeting that economic growth has been happening in some of the least developing countries has vet to be shared to effect the

THE SPECIAL HIGH LEVEL SPRING MEETING OF THE ECOSOC

necessary sustainable social development among the poor people. It is not just a question of producing or earning more; it is more a moral question to improve both the sustainable social conditions of the majority poor population of the world and the care of the environment. The international trade community should create a credible and empowering capacity of partnership with the impoverished citizens of the world. Development comes with transparency of leadership in all levels that manifests truthful accountability and coherence. Policies and law should develop institutions and pursue strategies according to identified development priorities especially the promotion of human rights, decent work for all, gender equality and ecological sustainability. The intergovernmental bodies, the stakeholders both public and private sectors, and civil societies have to work together to realize the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.



Global Forum on MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT BRUSSELS, BELGIUM JULY 2007

The NGO Committee on Migration aims to encourage the promotion and protection of migrants and their human rights, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

In its recent meetings, the Committee has been deliberating and planning on how NGOs can effectively participate in Belgium on July 9-11, 2007. Belgium is hosting the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels at the Egmont Palace. The first day of this Global Forum Meeting will be dedicated to civil society. The NGO

Committee on Migration has written a letter to the High-Level Representatives of UN Member states expressing two concerns, namely the form and the substance of the upcoming Meetings. The Committee strongly

advocates the participation of civil societies throughout the Global Forum. This has proven to be an effective way in many other international meetings. On the question of substance, the committee advocates, "to frame the global debate on migration policy within the normative and policy framework of

human and trade union rights, people-centered development, gender equality, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This is in accordance with relevant UN and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions, and the Conclusions of the Development Conferences of the previous years.

The Belgium Global Forum, can be a milestone in this age of globalization if it sets the international policies for migrants that will ensure their human rights that have been earnestly promoted by the United Nations.



CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 2007

The NGO Committee on Financing for Development (NGO FfD) offers a venue for both new and established NGOs to learn, discuss, and contribute to the plans, activities and initiatives of the Financing for Development Office (FfDO) of the United Nations to further the commitments of the Monterrey Consensus. In this way the Committee works to strengthen consultative

relationships with the FfDO of the United Nations Secretariat.

On Sunday the 15th of April 2007, The NGO FfD Civil Society Forum was held in preparation for the Spring meeting of the ECOSOC. Mr Daniel Platz from the FfDO gave a brief description of the dynamics and content of the Spring Meeting of the ECOSOC 2007. It was soon followed by four panels of presenters of the four main topics of the Spring Meeting, namely: Good Governance at all levels, The Voice and Participation of Developing Countries in Global Decision Making, Effective Use of

Trade to Fight Poverty "Realizing the Doha Development Agenda", and Aid Architecture and Aid Effectiveness – Innovative sources of Finance.

The Forum also dedicated a session on the emerging issues, positive and negative, identified by civil society since the Monterrey Consensus. The panel covered issues on wealth and social well being, collective bargaining, social protection and compensation, the role of women in economic growth process. The final stage of the Forum covered the avenues on the Road to Doha. It was clear that the participants of the Forum are one in maintaining a strong networking so that there will be a grassroots work that can accompany the preparation that will lead to the Meeting in Doha, Qatar in mid 2008.

THE FIRST VIVAT INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN WORKSHOP

Monte Cucco, Rome March 11-15 2007. VIVAT International was created on November 18th, 2000 when its first newly formed Board of Directors convened, and issued its first official communiqué. In it was written its principal vision to develop advocacy work in the United Nations believing that its humanitarian vision is consistent with the Justice and Peace endeavors that has already been in operation over last 130 years of the existence of the Society of the Divine Word and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. The sustainable socio-

economic development of people framed within the ideals of Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation can be seen as an essential dimension of VIVAT activities. In the last two years, at least, five other religious congregations have joined VIVAT as associate members, and all committed to the cause of justice, peace and integrity of creation. These are the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus (MCCJ), the Comboni Missionary Sisters (CMJ), the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), and The Congregation of the Holy Spirit,

popularly called Spiritan (CSSp). All are seriously deliberating becoming full members in time.

The first joint VIVAT International workshop participated by a delegation of both full and associate members happened in Monte Cucco, Rome on March 11th – 15th, 2007. There were 37 participants representing the 7 congregations and working in 12 countries in Europe. The workshop included first the vision, history, development, structure and activities of VIVAT international as an

NGO. The other second main content of the workshop was on the Structure and activities of the United Nations. In the light of these two main parts, there were group activities that were intermingled over the entire workshop. These group activities reflected and reported on the present activities and set up of the participating congregation, and how VIVAT as a means of working together can help to foster our involvement in the JPIC apostolate and advocacy work. The meeting appointed a contact person for each country present; and hopes to keep a network that can lead to a more united NGO body.

The whole workshop was organized by Michael Heinz, SVD, Maryjohn, SSpS, John Kilcrann, CSSp, Marina Cessarino, CSP, Alejandro Canales, MCCJ, Maureen O'Mally, MSHR, and Oswaldo Firth, OMI. The main content was presented by Gretta Fernandes, SSpS and Bernard Espiritu, SVD. The support from the major leaders of all the congregations that compose VIVAT International was outstanding through their presence at various parts of the workshop.

The participants of the First VIVAT International European Workshop in Rome included the representatives of the seven congregations members from 13 European countries.



STORY OF AN ENTERPRISING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Kibalat, Manabo, Abra, Philippines. The Indigenous people of Boliney, Abra suffered much from the earthquake in the 80's that saw the devastation of the Cordilleras and neighboring provinces. Almost all the fields in Boliney were covered with siltation and roads were destroyed due to landslides. Practically, the people were cut off from the rest of Abra population.

The men in the community sought the help from the people of Manabo, the nearest municipality. Through the efforts of Eugen Reinhardt, SVD and Corazon Agaloo, SSpS, they were resettled in Banat, Manabo. Almost 200 families came down and started rebuilding their lives in Banat Resettlement Area.

After almost three decades, a group of forty one men organized themselves as the TSIDKENU SADIRI FARMERS ASSOCIATION and took the initiative of asking the government to grant them a forest land to be cultivated since their meager income from planting and harvesting for the people of Manabo was not enough. They dreamed of sending their children to college, but their irregular income could hardly meet their daily needs. After so many visits and with their persistent follow-up, the Office of the Department

of Environment and Natural Resources granted them a Community -Based Forest Management (CBMF) certificate which will allow them to cultivate, develop and manage a 50-hectare forest land for 50 years. When they received the CBFM certificate they approached Celerina Zabala, SSpS to help them develop the land. According to their report, they first heard Zabala over the radio, discussing sustainable agriculture and they were encouraged to start with appropriate technology.

Zabala, saw the potentials of the group, with the initiatives they were showing, and knew that they could easily become agents of their own development. By using the Asset-Based Community Development Approach, she led the group to a realization that they could venture into organic muscovado sugar production since many of them knew how to make sugar, all of them are farmers and could plant sugar cane in their newly acquired land and that, there is a high demand for organic muscovado sugar in the market.

A start-up capital was needed to go with the enterprise, so through networking with KAPPIA, a provincial network of POs in Abra and CORDNET, a regional network of development-oriented NGOs and POs in Cordillera, the group availed of

a loan, which they could pay gradually from the income of their produce. As the project progressed, Celerina Zabala, SSpS together with Albert van Leeuwen, SVD and Valentin Gruner, SVD served as catalysts in their journey towards self-reliance. They supported the group with spiritual, material and technical assistance as well as organizational skills especially in project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Their continuing role in networking technical assistance, sourcing financial support and establishing market opportunities is essential in the group's struggle for a decent and permanent means of livelihood.

As to this writing, the group has planted rice, some fruit -bearing trees and sugar cane. They hope to harvest and start the production of muscovado sugar in 2007. It was the group's decision to plant individually but the processing and marketing of sugar will be a collective enterprise of the group. (As reported by Celerina Zabala, SSpS e-mail dated March 22, 2007).