



211 East. 43<sup>rd</sup> St., Suite 706 New York, NY 10017

Tel: 1 646 487 0003 Fax: 1 646 487 0004

E-mail: [viny@vivatinternational.org](mailto:viny@vivatinternational.org) \* [vivatssps-roma@pcn.net](mailto:vivatssps-roma@pcn.net) \* [vivatsvd@verbodivino.it](mailto:vivatsvd@verbodivino.it)

Website: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org)

**NEWSLETTER no. 22**

**September - October 2004**

## **COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OF UN AND VIVAT INTERNATIONAL**

VIVAT International (VIVAT) was among 546 registered organizations and 1,893 registered NGO representatives from 80 countries who participated in the just concluded 57<sup>th</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference with the theme "Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action". The Conference was held in UN, New York from September 8-10, 2004. **"There is no time to lose in ending extreme poverty and putting the world on a more humane and just path"**, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on the opening day of the Conference, this year aimed at mobilizing broader public support for the global anti-poverty goals, agreed upon by 189 State/National heads at the 2000 Millennium Summit.



As expected, the concentration during this Conference was on what the NGOs can and need to do on their own, and with the Governments, towards the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Most of the Panelists and Speakers, including UN officials recognized the role being played by NGOs in this process. Kofi Annan said the NGOs help in sustaining the political will of the Governments. Eveline Herfkens, the Secretary General's Executive Coordinator for the Millennium Development Goals pointed out that

civil society had insisted on an approach based on human rights, demanding government action and claiming participation. Julian Hunte, UN General Assembly President emphasized that UN partnerships with NGOs were proving to be mutually beneficial. They extended the global reach of the Organization and helped raise public awareness and ensure understanding of the issues before it. He also said that NGOs brought particular expertise and experience to bear on policy setting and the implementation of the agreed courses of actions.

The participants and the presenters generally agreed that some of the countries are on the way to fulfilling most of the MDGs by the target date 2015. However, it was also felt that some others, especially the African countries might not reach those goals unless some drastic steps were taken by all concerned. More needs to be done by the developing countries on their own regarding the first seven goals, namely to: 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) achieve universal primary education; 3) promote gender equality and empower women; 4) reduce child mortality; 5) improve maternal health; 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and 7) ensure environmental sustainability. The developed world also needs to do more in fulfilling goal number eight, namely to develop a global partnership for development. In real terms, this means the developing countries need to mobilize and prioritize domestic resources; for instance, to give basic education to every child. They also need to fight corruption and be more transparent and accountable. The developed countries will have to live up to their commitment of providing at least 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) as development assistance to poor countries. They will have to

provide debt relief and trade opportunities, while eliminating agricultural subsidies, which destroy markets on which poor farmers in poor countries depend. Jeffery Sachs, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on MDGs, brought out the point that the world would be more secure and safe if everyone's lives were taken seriously.

**Kathryn (Rose Martin) Glenn, SSpS and Patrick Hogan, SVD** from USA who participated in this Conference were very appreciative of the role NGOs were playing and the value of VIVAT participation in various processes influencing UN. Kathryn says "Thank you for inviting me to the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference. It was thought provoking, yet realistic..... I am still convinced that NGOs do play a very important role in getting Governments to change to better the lives of their people but I see more and more that it is a long and tedious process. I am grateful that our Congregations are at the UN with a voice for the Missionaries who work at the front-line."

Patrick says, "Finally, our two Congregations could join the host of other NGOs and be at the UN to represent the needs and concerns of the people we are serving in 62 countries throughout the world..... If these (MDGs) eight noble goals are to become realities, there has to be a mechanism to coordinate and mobilize efforts, and the single and most important force to accomplish these aims is found in the work of the NGOs."

(Full reports of Kathryn and Patrick, and Press Releases on this Conference on [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → poverty eradication → UN Millennium Development Goals)

The annual Conference is only one of the ways UN Department of Public Information

(DPI) links to people around the world through NGOs. DPI helps NGOs gain access to and disseminate information about the range of issues in which the United Nations is involved, to enable the public to understand better the aims and objectives of UN. NGOs associated with DPI disseminate information about the UN to their membership, thereby building knowledge of and support for the Organization at the grassroots level. This dissemination includes: Publicizing UN activities around the world on such issues as peace and security; economic and social development, human rights, humanitarian affairs and international law; promoting UN observances and international years established by the General Assembly to focus world attention on important issues facing humanity.

VIVAT International, now accredited to ECOSOC of UN, has been promoting the values and objectives of UN directly or indirectly at the grassroots level and at UN headquarter's level for the last five years. As of now, even though VIVAT is not associated with DPI, it has been disseminating information about UN, especially to people in remote areas of the World through radio, video, newsletters and websites, and also participating in annual Conferences and Thursday Briefings at UN Headquarters in New York. Many VIVAT members are engaged in addressing HIV/AIDS in several countries, particularly in Africa.

Upon obtaining association with DPI, VIVAT will intensify its collaboration with DPI at UN headquarter's and grass roots levels. At national levels, it will collaborate with UN Information Centers (UNICs) and UN Information Services (UNISs) to organize conferences, seminars and publicity through media, either alone or together with those Centers.

## **ECOSOC SUBSTANTIVE SESSION AND LDC WATCH June 28-30, 2004:**

In keeping with our priority on Africa, VIVAT actively participated in the ECOSOC Substantive Session from June 28-30, 2004 at UN, New York, that concentrated on Least Developed countries (LDCs) through a collaborative process with Least Developed Countries Watch (LDC Watch). LDC Watch is highly concentrating on Africa. VIVAT moderated an NGO Panel, participated in round tables, and was a panelist on the Panel

organized by DESA Section of UN on the final day. We also made some specific recommendations both in terms of action by the Governments and collaboration and networking by the NGOs. (For more information on our participation, LDC Watch, report and recommendations of LDC Watch, and its press advisory: [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → Poverty Eradication → Least Developed Countries and Africa)

## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

### Low-Cost Housing Project of SVDs and SSpS in Cebu, Philippines:

Through the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation – Integrated Development Center (JPIC-IDC), 44 poor families in Sitio Camolinas, Barangay Poblacion, Cordova, Cebu received their own houses in April 2004. The houses are JPIC-IDC's second batch of low-cost housing units under its Integrated Community Development Program, which aims to provide decent and affordable housing for the marginalized poor and homeless in Cordova. The housing project is the result of the partnership between JPIC-IDC and the local Cordova Government. JPIC-IDC is an NGO, consisting of SVDs, SSpS and lay people

working in a collaborative way, which emphasizes the integral dimension of development – connection with God, people and creation in a participatory manner. Briggs Odohan, SVD, Chairperson, Board of Directors says “through this NGO we not only denounce the values that alienate humans from God, but also announce alternative values that need to be presented, the alternative structures that need to be initiated/developed and even alternative imagination that needs to be awakened.” (From the report of the Project sent by Briggs Odohan, SVD dated April 19, 2004 and “Cebu Daily News”, April 4, 2004)

### SVD's Work among the Prisoners and their Families in Juiz de Fora, Brazil:

SVDs in Juiz de Fora, Brazil are assisting the prisoners and their families legally and materially through an NGO “Ecumenical Association for Juridical Support of Prisoners (AEAJE)”. Nilton G. Goncalves, SVD is its director. The main aim of AEAJE is to give free legal assistance to sentenced prisoners who cannot have access to private legal assistance or who have been badly assisted by the public defense system of the State. AEAJE was founded by a group of Catholics and others, motivated by the “Brotherhood Campaign” promoted by the Church in 1996. AEAJE's activities are basically threefold: one, seeking information on the lawsuits at

the criminal courts and analyzing those already under sentence at the execution court; two, listening to the prisoners in their needs in terms of legal assistance; and, three, intervening in the law-suits under execution at the courts. AEAJE also assists the families of the sentenced prisoners in their material needs – food, medicine, information on law-suits at the courts, and documents for those prisoners who leave prison. The activities of AEAJE are well recognized and respected by the authorities – judges, attorneys, private lawyers, directors and agents at the prisons in Juiz de Fora. (From the report of Nilton G. Goncalves, SVD dated July 15, 2004).

### VIVAT International Members in Brazil Condemn Attacks on Street People in Sao Paulo, Brazil in August 2004

SVDs and SSpS, who are members of VIVAT International strongly condemned the attacks on Street People in Sao Paulo, Brazil that took place on August 19 and 21, 2004, and published an open letter (in Portuguese) together with other Civil Society Organizations and “Pastorales Sociais” demanding the Government Administration to take immediate action and arrest the people responsible for it, and bring an end to this barbaric act. As reported by Ferdinando Doren Beki, SVD, the JPIC Coordinator of central Brazil, in the week of August 19,

2004, 15 street people were brutally attacked, and out of these, five have died. **Ferdinando Doren Beki, SVD** reports that SVDs and SSpS of central Brazil, together with lay collaborators are involved in the ministry with street population in and around Sao Paulo. A couple of organizations and movements through which they work are: Associacao Rede Rua, and The Commission of Pastoral of Land (Comissão Pastoral da Terra-CPT) of the State of São Paulo. (More information on [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org) → Poverty Eradication → Street People)

## VIVAT INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITED TO ECOSOC OF UN

On July 26, 2004 VIVAT Central Office in New York received a faxed official letter from the NGO Section, DESA, UN, informing us that Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in its regular session in July 2004 decided to grant Special Consultative Status to VIVAT International. This will strengthen our work at the grass roots level and help us to collaborate better with UN at the national, regional and headquarters levels. In the coming months the Executive Team will discuss with SVDs and SSpS, who are members of VIVAT International, what it means to be accredited to UN and what are our privileges and responsibilities.

We also take this opportunity to specially thank three accredited NGOs who helped us in different ways and intensity. Franciscans International mentored one of the Executive Team members in the year 2000 and provided UN ground passes from February 2000 till June 2004. Global Education Associates also mentored one of the Executive Team members in the year 2000 and provided UN ground passes from January 2000 till January 2003. And Elizabeth Seton Federation provided UN ground pass to one of the Executive Team members from June 2003 till December 2003.

### **Kathryn (Rose Martin) Glenn, SSpS volunteers to help in VIVAT Central Office:**

VIVAT Central Office is fortunate to have Kathryn (Rose Martin) Glenn, SSpS to help the Executive Team in office work in August and September 2004 in New York. Her presence

and enthusiasm is a great blessing. She is also participating in some of the meetings and Conferences taking place at UN as VIVAT representative.

### **VIVAT International is on the web page of Financing for Development (FfD) of UN:**

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/cs-Nongovern-organ-workinggroup.pdf>. It gives information of VIVAT and its purpose of being part of the

"Financing for Development Non-governmental Organizations Working Group (FfD-NGOWG)" at UN.

## WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2004

September 21 has been designated by the UN General Assembly as "World Day of Peace." The objective of the day is "To encourage a worldwide, 24-hour spiritual observance for peace and nonviolence." Every house of worship and place of spiritual practice and all religious and faith groups are asked to demonstrate the power of prayer in promoting peace and

preventing violence. Individuals and groups are invited to support this worldwide initiative by committing themselves to a 24 hour vigil for peace on September 21. For more information in different languages: [www.idpvigil.com](http://www.idpvigil.com). VIVAT International is one of the supporting organizations of UN International Day of Peace Vigil.

### **Did you know?**

All back issues of VIVAT Newsletters are available on [www.vivatinternational.org](http://www.vivatinternational.org), under VIVAT International Newsletters. Visit our website for information on VIVAT activities with UN and in the field. It also gives you a direct link to UN website, published in six languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

VIVAT International Newsletter is published bi-monthly.

The VI Newsletter is not copyrighted and reproduction of articles is welcomed provided proper credit is given.

Executive Team (VINY, VIVAT International in New York):

Lawrence Correa SVD (Chairperson), Maria Consolacion Matnao SSpS (Co chairperson).

Editor: Mary Helen Sullivan SSpS.

Translators: Sr. Maria Angelica Agüero SSpS (Spanish); Karl Jansen SVD (German).