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PARTICIPATION OF VIVAT INTERNATIONAL IN THE 43RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

VIVAT International will be taking part in the 43rd Session of the Commission for Social Development that will take place from February 9-18, 2005 in UN headquarters, New York. The Session will review the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit and the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly of the UN that took place in Geneva in 2000. (More information: www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd)

VIVAT has taken keen interest in this Commission as it relates to the social dimension of development. Specifically, VIVAT has worked through the NGO Committee for Social Development all through the year 2004 and has produced and endorsed the following Joint Statements submitted to the Commission in November, 2004:

- Submitted a Statement on **Poverty Eradication**.
- Endorsed and Supported a Statement on **HIV/AIDS Orphans**.
- Supported a Statement on **Structural Adjustment**.
- Supported a Statement on **Social Integration**.
- Endorsed and Supported a **Statement on Gender**.
- Endorsed and Supported a Statement on **Africa**.

The above Statements are available on VIVAT website: www.vivatinternational.org → poverty eradication → Commission for Social Development. VIVAT together with a couple of other NGOs is organizing a side event during

this Session. Gretta Fernandes, SSpS, is one of the speakers and she is going to speak on: Micro Credit and Poverty Eradication, with special reference to empowerment of rural women.

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2005

World Social Forum 2005 is going to be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil from January 26-31, 2005. VIVAT members in large numbers from Brazil and a few other countries are going to take part in this Peoples' Movement. The World Social Forum is not an organization, not a united front platform, but "...an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of

experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a society centered on the human person". (From the WSF Charter of Principles. More details: www.worldsocialforum.org)

**ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION NGO SECTION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR VIVAT INTERNATIONAL

**VIVAT was approved for Association with the Department of Public Information (DPI) of
UN on December 15, 2004**

We are happy to announce the good news that VIVAT was approved for Association with the Department of Public Information (DPI) on

December 15, 2004. We thank all our members and others for supporting us in our efforts in obtaining the association with DPI.

Following are a Few of the VIVAT Best Practices in Media and Communication Submitted to the Department of Public Information (DPI), While Applying for VIVAT Association with DPI of UN.

Verbo Filmes, Brazil: Verbo Filmes is a communication center organized and managed by the members of VIVAT International in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Cireneu Kuhn, SVD is its present director. Verbo Filmes has produced over 200 films/videos. Many of them are based on social issues, such as environment, racism, homelessness, human rights and so forth. These films/videos are widely used by Schools, NGO's, Universities and Communities. The most recent video production of Verbo Filmes was on Water with the title "**Agua, fonte de vida**" (Water, source of life). Their next production is a documentary with the theme "**Peace and Solidarity**".

(From the information received from Niels Johansen, SVD, Communication Coordinator in Rome, on September 1, 2004)

Streevani: *Streevani* (voice of women) is an organization for the empowerment of women. It was a sister concern of Ishvani Kendra, Pune, India till 2003. Currently the organization is managed by the SSpS of South India Province. For the past 24 years *Streevani* has worked for the integral liberation of the woman in view of restoring her dignity as a person and equal partner with man within the framework of Indian society. Besides research, documentation, books and two video documentaries, *Streevani* is actively involved at the grass roots level, organizing women through the medium of "Self-help Groups", providing them with legal aid and various training

programs, promoting women's qualitative participation in the local government, counseling women in distress, assisting the women to benefit from government programs, and gradually to be instrumental in eradicating poverty.

(From the information received from Ida Lobo, SSpS, as attachment to e-mail on September 25, 2004)

Kairos: Kairos is the communication centre of the SVDs, based in Maynooth, Ireland. Being committed to media and training, it has produced high quality programs for national radio and television. Some of its programs are related to social issues dealing with racism, poverty, and globalisation.

(From the information received from Niels Johansen, SVD, Communication Coordinator in Rome, on September 1, 2004)

Alba: Macario Villalon, SVD is animating a group of women in Zamora, Spain. The name of the group is Alba. These women collect money and help many pregnant women, mothers and children of the very poor areas of Sao Paulo in Brazil. They intend to make the poor women self-sufficient by setting up a small factory in Sao Paulo, purchasing sewing machines, and producing diapers to be sold.
(From the newspaper clipping of the interview with Macario Villalon, SVD, received on August 18, 2004)

REPORTS FROM THE MEMBERS

Mother of Perpetual Help AIDS Center, Thailand: The SVDs in Udon Thani, Northeast Thailand are working with HIV/AIDS victims for ten years. Damien Lunders, SVD and James Wilkins, SVD are at present running the Mother of Perpetual help AIDS Centre.

HIV/AIDS is on the increase despite the strenuous efforts to make people aware of its causes and consequences. Since 1997, the center has been educating and creating awareness with regard to HIV/AIDS by organising health camps in the community and in schools. It has established a home for the HIV affected and orphaned children, and is managing a hospice for caring for the dying adults. The center has programs for helping children who remain in their villages either in the care of a single parent or other relatives or friends. This program involves distribution of milk and other food, school uniforms and other school materials. The center intends to assist wherever possible. Those who lack proper care will be provided with a caring home meeting

both physical and emotional needs. (Full story on www.vivatinternational.org → Women → HIV/AIDS)

Tsunami Disaster: The Tsunami disaster left the world staggered by killing thousands and crippling the lives of thousands of people at the close of 2004. In solidarity with all the victims we mourn the loss of lives of so many thousands in South East Asia. We appreciate our members in Indonesia, India and Thailand who have been working in many rescue operations in different capacities to help the victims to cope with the crises. It is so wonderful to see how the civil societies and various governments responded generously to reach out to the victims in various capacities. The concluding remarks of Secretary General Kofi Annan at the Special ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian) Leaders' meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami invite all of us to join hands in rebuilding our world, "Together we will restore strength and faith. Together we will rebuild. Together we will recover."

VIVAT Executive Team Participates in the Provincial Assembly of SSpS of USA Province:

Lawrence Correa, SVD and Gretta Fernandes, SSpS participated in the Provincial Assembly of the SSpS of USA Province from the 26th to 28th November 2004 at Techny near Chicago. Lawrence briefed the members about VIVAT, its involvement at the United Nations and its collaboration with the members. It was a time of journeying together for the SSpS to find concretely new avenues in their ministry. Some

of the highlights were to work towards eradicating racial prejudice, working for HIV/AIDS victims and empowering women and children who are victims of violence. There were eighty participants, including lay collaborators. The assembly was in preparation for the upcoming Provincial Chapter, which will be held February 2-5, 2005.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Commission on the Status of Women: The forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be held from 28 February to 11 March 2005 at United Nations

Headquarters in New York. Forty-ninth Session of the CSW themes: *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the

special session of the General Assembly entitled “women 2000:gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century”.

Commission on Sustainable Development:
The 12th and 13th Sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) are going to take place from March 14 to April 1, 2005. They will focus on water, sanitation and human settlements. A number of crosscutting issues

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: The Fourth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will take place from May 9-20, 2005. The special theme will be

*Current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls.

will also be addressed, such as poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, health, education and sustainable development in a globalized world. More information:

www.un.org/esa/sustdev

“Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples”. More information:

www.un.org/socdev/pfi/index.html

VIVAT International will participate in and contribute to the above-mentioned Commissions.

Change of President and Chairperson of VIVAT International

On January 7, 2005 during the VIVAT Board of Directors Meeting held at Rome, the President and Chairperson have been changed as follows:

President - Antonio M. Pernia, SVD

Chairperson - Gretta M. Fernandes, SSpS

Hearty Congratulations to both and God’s blessings in this important mission.

We thank the outgoing President and Chairperson, Agada V. Brand, SSpS and Lawrence Correa, SVD, respectively for their tremendous service and leadership in the growth of VIVAT

International Year of Microcredit – 2005

Launch of the Year: November 18, 2004 – UN officially launched the International Year of Microcredit 2005. For more information: www.yearofmicrocredit.org

On behalf of VIVAT, Lawrence Correa, SVD was invited for a luncheon round table on “Empowering Women Through Microcredit”. This was organized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Office of the High Representatives for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS). VIVAT took this opportunity to share about the Microcredit system as one of our best practices of Streevani, Pune, India.

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