



211 East. 43rd St., Suite 706 New York, NY 10017

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

E-mail: viny@vivatinternational.org * vivatssps-roma@pcn.net * vivatsvd@verbodivino.it

Website: www.vivatinternational.org

NEWSLETTER no. 27

July – August 2005

PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES – FOURTH SESSION

Indigenous Peoples, NGOs and the Government Delegates from all over the world met once again at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from May 16 to 27, 2005 to address the issues of poverty and education of the Indigenous Peoples, during the Fourth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII). The Forum had a greater significance from the fact that Governments were going to meet at the beginning of September to review the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in the year 2000 and recommit themselves, together with Civil Society, to achieve them by the year 2015.

The Forum, consisting of both Government and Indigenous/Civil Society representatives, came up with certain recommendations that would make sure that Indigenous Peoples interests are included and not compromised while achieving the MDGs. Specifically, it asked the States, the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations to ensure that Indigenous Peoples participate in designing, implementing and monitoring poverty reduction strategies. The Forum recommended that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) clearly identify rights to indigenous land, forest, marine and other natural resources; specify the role of indigenous peoples; and acknowledge their control over land, forest, and natural resources. It also asked the States to recognize indigenous rights to food security and the sustainable production and consumption of healthy and nutritious foods by using appropriate sustainable technology. Special emphasis was laid to protect

water from being privatized, which would affect the integrity of waters and impoverish communities, particularly women. In regard to achieving universal primary education, the Forum recommended that States endorse intercultural education as a national policy priority, and review current national curricula and textbooks to remove culturally discriminatory materials and enhance knowledge of indigenous cultures.

“In closing remarks, Forum Chairperson Victoria Tauli-Corpuz noted that recommendations adopted under its Millennium Goal theme of eradicating poverty and hunger would have significant impacts on the lives of indigenous peoples, if implemented. She added, however, that strong and creative partnerships between indigenous peoples, governments and the United Nations system, and a human rights-based framework for development, would be needed to significantly change the indigenous poverty situation.” (From the UN Press Release HR/4850 of May 27, 2005) For further details on the fourth session, visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/4session/4session.htm>

Gretta Fernandes, SSpS, Lawrence Correa, SVD and Daisuke Narui, SVD from VIVAT took active part in this Forum and contributed to the joint NGO statements made to the Forum. Specifically, VIVAT submitted a Statement to the Secretariat of the Forum, based on the input received from the members. In that Statement, VIVAT highlighted how some of the basic

rights of the indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women, are ignored and violated. One of the important suggestions contained in that Statement is to the Governments, Industries, and Civil Society to guarantee to all indigenous peoples an equitable access to resources, namely, food, water, education, health, sanitation, housing and employment by translating government policies into a clear, substantial program that directly affects the lives of the indigenous peoples. The statement is

available on www.vivatinternational.org → Poverty Eradication → Indigenous Issues.

Based on the specific contribution received from VIVAT Members in Australia, the Executive Team had submitted a Statement to the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN before the Forum, and had a meeting with Australian Government Delegation on May 25, 2005 at UN Headquarters, New York.

VIVAT INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN TOGO

VIVAT International (VIVAT) is concerned about the political situation in Togo, especially after the April 2005 Presidential election. In solidarity with the thousands of people, especially women and children who are affected due to this conflict, the VIVAT Executive Team responded to this situation in the following manner:

- ✓ Raised this issue during the DPI/NGO Briefing on Thursday, April 28, 2005 and requested UN to take immediate and appropriate action.
- ✓ Prepared a write-up on this issue and up-linked it to the front page of VIVAT.
- ✓ Sent this information to other NGOs collaborating with UN and requested them

to influence UN and the International Community.

- ✓ Requested VIVAT members in Europe and USA to make an appeal to their respective Governments, to mediate with the Political Parties in Togo to bring in peace and normalcy.

VIVAT hopes that normalcy will soon be restored and the political parties in Togo will work towards finding a lasting political solution in the interest of its citizens. We once again appeal to the United Nations and the international community to mediate to end the Political crisis.

REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS

St. Arnold Jansen Human Development Center, Simbu, Papua New Guinea



Fufu, gari and shito are certainly not common English terms. Nor are they common in Papua New Guinea (PNG). They are food items made from root crops, such as tapioca or casava, and used in Africa. Thanks to **Joseph Sakite, SVD**, (seen in the picture) originally from Ghana, and founder of St. Arnold Jansen Human Development Center, the people in Simbu Province of PNG are now learning about such food items and using them for their sustenance.

It all began in 1997, when PNG had a long dry spell. Consequently, people were starving. At

that time, he taught them to eat fufu, gari and shito made out of casava, as an alternate to baked sweet potatoes. It helped them to eat sufficiently and regularly.

Now the Centre provides several programs such as food processing, using appropriate technology, promoting the use of the land for growing food, fish farming, pottery and brick

making, youth leadership trainings, quality education, and drug rehabilitation. The Center also runs a program called “Gutpela Sindaun” – a Melasian Pidgin term for Peace and Prosperity. Through this program the Center promotes good living conditions, self-reliance and transformation in the society.

(As reported by Zelia Cordeiro, SSpS, through e-mail, May 10, 2005)

Irrkerlantye Community Development Centre (ICDC), Alice Springs, Central Australia

Australia has two kinds of Indigenous Peoples – Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders, and they represent about two percent of the total population of Australia. Endemic poverty, trashed housing, unemployment and alcohol related violence and despair are just a few of the things we label “Aboriginal problems”. The issues of indigenous Australia seem overwhelming and almost impossible to resolve at times.

In an attempt to redress the long-term and systemic disadvantage and wanting to improve their quality of life, a group of Central Arnernte families came together and initiated the project ICDC together with VIVAT members. It helps mainly through holistic and intergenerational

models of capacity building, wherein the individuals and families are empowered to work towards improved physical, social, economic and cultural outcomes. The ICDC has five interconnecting programs including Community Development Planning, Arnernte Language and Culture, Health and Well Being, Work and Enterprise Development, and Education and Training.

What one hopes is that the best way for Indigenous Peoples to break the poverty and oppression is to attain recognition of their sovereignty.

(From the report sent by Aseli Raass, SVD on May 9, 2005. For more information: araass2000@yahoo.com)

Participation of Dorothee Laufenberg, SSpS in the 49th Session of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-49)

Dorothee Laufenberg, SSpS from Chicago, Illinois participated in the CSW 49 at UN headquarters from February 28 to March 11, 2005. Below is a quote from her letter to VIVAT executive team: “I participated mostly in side events, which dealt with the issues of trafficking of women and HIV/AIDS. ‘Poverty’ was the ‘red line’ running through all those side events. Poverty eradication would be the

solution to most of the world problems. VIVAT is such an NGO with the possibility of working in partnership with governments and the people at the grassroots to reduce the evils of poverty, violence and war. I am very grateful for the experience and the knowledge I gained through this Session at the UN. I hope all our JPIC efforts help us to work better both at the grassroots and at the systematic levels.”

Special Days to Remember

*International Youth Day –August 12 *International Peace day –September 21

* International Day of Indigenous Peoples – August 9

Hearty Welcome to Reynaldo Jimenez, SVD and Daisuke Narui, SVD

VIVAT extends a hearty welcome to **Reynaldo Jimenez, SVD** to VIVAT Executive Team. He comes from the Philippines North Province and prior to joining VIVAT Executive Team he was the President of the Divine Word College of Laoag and the JPIC Coordinator. He will take charge as the Co-Chairperson from Lawrence Correa, SVD on July 29, 2005. Reynaldo has a Masters Degree in Religion and Culture. VIVAT wishes him every success in this unique ministry of both SVDs and SSpS here, in

collaboration with the United Nations, New York.

A warm welcome to **Daisuke Narui, SVD** to VIVAT Central Office, New York. Daisuke belongs to Japan Province and has joined VIVAT Central Office as an Intern on May 9, 2005 and will be here until March 2006. We wish him well and hope he will have a fruitful learning experience, which will enable him to take up JPIC work upon returning to Japan.

International Day of Peace

Building peace, one day at a time: This is the vision behind the United Nations' resolution for an International Day of Peace. We invite all VIVAT members to join with millions of other individuals and groups around the world on

September 21 in honoring the International Day of Peace through community prayer and other spiritual observances. More information will be sent to you in our next circular to Provincials/Regionals and JPIC Coordinators.

Debt Relief

When the Finance Ministers of G-8 met in London on June 10-11, 2005 they agreed to cancel USD 40 billion debt owed by 18 of the poorest countries, many in sub-Saharan Africa, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia and four countries in Latin America, namely: Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras, and Ecuador. This will enable these countries to live a better life by having more money available for health, education and to eradicate poverty. The safeguards put up by the rich nations are related to improving governance and reducing corruption. One only hopes that debt

relief/cancellation conditionalities are not at the cost of the sovereignty of the poor nations.

VIVAT thanks its members who have taken an active part in various debt cancellation campaigns, such as submitting statements and sign-on letters to their governments and net working with other non-profit organizations in this cause. We shall continue to support and network, and take an active part in the international campaign for cancellation of debt, so that many more poor countries will have their debt cancelled and the conditionalities reduced, in the near future.

UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE UN, NEW YORK

***Substantive Session of ECOSOC 2005: June 29 to July 27**

***Second Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects, July 11-15, 2005**

VIVAT International (VIVAT) Newsletter is published bi-monthly. The VIVAT Newsletter is not copyrighted and reproduction of articles is welcomed provided proper credit is given.

VIVAT Executive Team, VIVAT Central Office, New York:

Gretta Fernandes SSpS (Chairperson), Lawrence Correa SVD (Co chairperson).

Editor: Mary Helen Sullivan SSpS.

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