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FEW WORDS FROM LAWRENCE CORREA SVD

After hearing that I was leaving New York for good, a number of people were asking me the question, “How do you feel as you are leaving VIVAT Central Office?” My response to them was “I feel a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. It is painful to say good-bye to an assignment that is so dear to my heart and life. However, I need to move on... to be planted in another job and place in pursuit of being an instrument of God’s plan of establishing justice, peace and love in this world.”

It has been a historical journey from January 2000 till this day. I had the will, passion and interest in this mission, especially to collaborate with United Nations (UN). But, I did not have the experience of working at the international level, and that too of lobbying with Government delegates at the UN. During this period, VIVAT was born and got accredited to ECOSOC, and associated with DPI of UN. The journey was not always very smooth, and easy, as the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) were trying to establish an organization that did not have a precedent. However, I always enjoyed the support of VIVAT Board, many SVD and SSpS Provincials/Regionals, and a number of SVDs and SSpS. Above all, it was a wonderful and a joyful experience to work with Carmen Castro SSpS and Gretta Fernandes SSpS. There is one question that haunts every one of us: “The UN being what it is today, is it worth it for the two Congregations to collaborate with it through VIVAT?” My response

to that question is: Yes, UN is not a perfect organization, but there is no other better international secular organization than this that makes it possible for the nations of the world to come together, and the Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to collaborate with them, to maintain peace, establish justice and promote development, especially of the poor all over the world. Through constant and persistent lobbying, we are able to help Governments to find solutions to world problems, though slowly, and in small measure.

My parting words to the VIVAT Executive Team, under the leadership of Gretta Fernandes SSpS: Keep up the good work, help this baby (VIVAT) grow to be a mature organization addressing JPIC problems and suggesting solutions at the UN, based on the activities and experiences of VIVAT members all over the world. My appeal to VIVAT members is: Own VIVAT as your organization. Take advantage of the privileges and responsibilities available to you as a member of VIVAT, and dialogue with your local and national Governments as VIVAT, and support and collaborate with the Executive Team in whatever way possible to you. There is an old saying that appeals to me very much: “every drop put together makes the ocean”. Let each one of us play his/her role in the common search for justice, peace, and eradicating disease and poverty in this world.

INFORMAL INTERACTIVE HEARINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH NGOS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR: JUNE 23-24 2005, UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

It was the first-ever interactive session held by United Nations with NGOs, Civil Society and the Private Sector to hear proposals on Security, Human Rights, Development and UN Reform. Around 200

representatives were selected as speakers and active participants to take part in round table conferences based on the Secretary General’s landmark report: In Larger Freedom. The four sessions were: Freedom

from Fear, Freedom from Want, Freedom to live in Dignity, and Strengthening the UN.

The interactive hearings took place mainly in preparation for the landmark summit to be held in September to review worldwide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of ambitious targets, ranging from halving extreme poverty, to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, and to providing universal primary education, all by 2015. The participants made proposals on Security, Human Rights, Development and UN Renewal during interactive sessions with Member States.

VIVAT was selected as an active participant in the Session on 'Freedom from Want'. VIVAT made a contribution in regard to the following: 100% Debt Cancellation of the poorest countries; giving Official Development Assistance right now as promised, in

order to achieve the MDGs; promoting education of girls; and fostering Micro credit to empower women. In the concluding Session, Mr. Kofi Annan hailed the NGOs, Civil Society and the Private Sector and said, "As a civil society and as individuals you have quite a lot of power and you know how to use it. And when you mobilize, you usually get results." He further said, "We need your support. We are counting on you, and many around the world are counting on you, particularly the poor, the weak, the frightened, and the intimidated who have no voice or representation in powerful chambers".

The hearings were a historical event, as it provided for the first time, within the framework of the General Assembly, an opportunity for interaction between Member States and representatives of Civil Society and the Private Sector. For more information: www.vivatinternational.org → UN Secretary General Hails Key Role of NGOs.

SECOND HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Second High Level Dialogue on Financing for Development (FfD) was held in preparation for the upcoming General Assembly on September 14-16, 2005. At the opening, Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN, stressed the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Several countries gave their country assessment vis-à-vis MDGs. Of particular interest was the report of the Ministers of the Working Group on Innovative Sources of Financing, Fight Against Hunger and Poverty (Algeria, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain). The Working Group proposed solidarity contribution through airline tickets. Why airline tickets? Airline passengers can afford the small contribution. It is not a tax but a contribution. The contribution can either be given voluntarily or collected on a set basis depending on the country and will be scaled according to ticket class. The estimated contributions could reach US \$ 10 Billion!

It is simple yet original, innovative but most of all, doable and practical. Other proposals came from NGOs and the Civil Society. A common proposal, mentioned even by some member states, is that developing countries must be given a level playing field in international trade. Fair trade is the long-term solution to the debt problem. Without fair trade, no amount of aid will be enough.

At the closing, the UN General Assembly President, Mr. Jean Ping, stressed the sense of urgency especially in Africa where millions die due to hunger and preventable diseases.

The increasing role of NGOs and the Civil Society is an acknowledgement of their contribution to the UN. VIVAT members are invited to come up with concrete and innovative proposals for financing for development, especially aimed at alleviating poverty.

SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS (ECOSOC) June 29 – July 27, 2005

The High-Level Segment of the Substantive Session of the ECOSOC, 2005 had the theme: "Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes

of major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities: a regional perspective". The summary statement of the UN Secretary General on the ECOSOC Session,

2005 proposed key instruments or recommendations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Most of the recommendations have been on the floor for several years. But the official acknowledgement of the role of NGOs and the Civil Society in development is unique. UN promotes consensus building among Member States and includes the NGOs and Civil Society in order that the UN comes

up with better solutions to solve world problems like hunger, poverty and sickness.

VIVAT had submitted a written statement to ECOSOC, which was published in six official languages of the UN. In it, VIVAT stressed the need for a genuine partnership, not only among States but also with key stakeholders, mainly the poor themselves.

SECOND BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES (BMS) 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 ASPECTS, July 11-15, 2005

The Second Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from July 11 to 15, 2005. This meeting discussed further the implementation of the program of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in all its aspects.

There were a variety of participants from Member States, NGOs and Civil Society. Statements were made by the Member States, the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting Activities (WFSA) and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), a network of NGOs primarily promoting elimination of illicit trade in SALW. VIVAT is a collaborative member of IANSA. IANSA facilitated a panel discussion, which brought forth grassroots voices of victims, doctors and activists. It also launched a Red Book, which is the comprehensive report on the problem of proliferation of SALW all over the World. Member

States thanked the NGOs, which are against proliferation of SALW for their active intervention in their own countries and at international bodies such as the UN.

After the thematic discussions, more than 13 countries announced their support for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), drafted by a group of human rights activists, and arms control NGOs in partnership with international legal experts. For more information: www.un.org/events/smallarms2005/

VIVAT International submitted a written statement to the participants of BMS. One of the key issues in the statement was to end the illicit sale and proliferation of SALW, particularly in developing countries. This is available on www.vivatinternational.org → Culture of Peace → VIVAT Statement to the Participants of Second Biennial Meeting of States.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Women Empowerment through Micro Credit Programs in Ethiopia

The women in rural Ethiopia are highly in debt since they don't generate enough income. They need to borrow money from neighbors, family members, and business people to survive. Considering this situation, in 1996 VIVAT members in Ethiopia started a micro credit program as a small project for economic independence of women and poverty reduction in Aletmena. Loans were provided as capital to start income-generating projects: some set up shops, some bought land for farming, and still others sent their children to school. VIVAT members have witnessed significant development

among the women in Aletmena within these 9 years. The women were able to repay the loan little by little and complete the repayment within 8 to 12 months. The project has expanded into 10 villages. Now, NGOs are encouraging the micro credit enterprise as a poverty reduction program in entire Ethiopia. It is believed that micro credit is a program which can empower people to change their lives for the better by improving health care, nutrition, and education of children. (From the reports sent by Lovely Thomas SSpS, e-mail dated May 24, 2005)

VIVAT Executive Team Meets With SVD And SSPS USA Provincials



On July 14, 2005 the VIVAT Executive Team had a meeting with Judy Vallimont SSps, Mark Weber SVD, (USC) and Joe Miller SVD, (USW) at the

Convent of the Holy Spirit, Techny, IL. Joe Simon, SVD, (USS) regretted he was unable to attend due to other responsibilities. Reynaldo Jimenez SVD, newly appointed Co-chairperson of VIVAT Executive Team (ET) was present for the meeting. VIVAT ET made PowerPoint presentations on the history and development of VIVAT and the main benefits and responsibilities of VIVAT that of being accredited to ECOSOC and associated with DPI of UN. The meeting was interactive and enriching and gave a sure hope for better collaboration of VIVAT members in the USA with the VIVAT Central Office. (From right to left: Judy Vallimont SSps, Mark Weber SVD, Joe Miller SVD, Reynaldo Jimenez SVD, Lawrence Correa SVD, and Gretta Fernandes SSps).

A BIG THANKS TO LAWRENCE CORREA, SVD

On behalf of all VIVAT Members, VIVAT Executive Team thanks Lawrence Correa SVD for his pioneering work and relentless efforts in forming VIVAT International. It was mainly his intensive effort and hard work that enabled VIVAT to obtain Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC and Association with Department of Public Information of UN. Today, VIVAT is very much known and respected in the UN and NGO Circles here at UN Headquarters, New York. Lawrence never missed an opportunity to speak for the marginalized and oppressed people of our world. What one sees in him is a passionate love and vision for VIVAT, total commitment and faithfulness to the task entrusted to him. We wish him every success in his future assignment and hope that he continues to be an inspiration to many more to work for Justice and Peace.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE UN, NEW YORK

September 7-9, 2005: 58th DPI/NGO Annual Conference, New York
September 14-16, 2005: Millennium Summit Review, UN, New York

DAYS TO OBSERVE

*International Day of Peace - September 21 *World Habitat Day - October 3 *World Food Day - Oct 16
*International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - Oct 17 *United Nations Day - Oct 24
*World Development Information Day - Oct 24 *Disarmament Week - October 24-30

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