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777 UN Plaza, East 44th Street, Suite 6F, New York, NY 10017
Tel. +1 646 487 0003 Email : viny@vivatinternational.org
Website : www.vivatinternational.org

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DEAR READERS,

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic continues to hurt our world with unbearable impacts and long-term consequences. At a global level, systemic inequalities and exploitation have grown. There are also positive stories locally and globally. VIVAT members everywhere are striving in their way to bring hope to people as they reach out to them.

VIVAT pays tribute to Late Sr. Agada Brand SSpS, former President of VIVAT International, whose vision has greatly contributed to the beginning of this organization.

This issue brings information on events held at the UN during the High-level Political Forum and 75th Session of the UN General Assembly as well as Pandemic-related stories from the ground, from our members.

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A LOVING AND GRATEFUL TRIBUTE TO SR. AGADA BRAND SSPS

Sr. Agada Brand, who constantly sowed the seed of common mission in the hearts of the SSpS dared to dream and build bridges. During the time of her leadership as the Congregational Leader, she envisioned along with her team of new ventures that would make a positive difference to our world, in each country and its people. She constantly explored various options to make our missionary presence an effective one. She made paths by walking, leaving a trail for others to walk on in many ways. It wouldn't be wrong to say, that VIVAT International originated in her mind, as a pursuit /expression of our one common mission that would enable us to advocate for systemic change at the global level. VIVAT is indebted to her, and her visionary leadership that she leaves behind as a legacy.

When I joined VIVAT in 2015, I was pleasantly surprised to receive an email from Sr. Agada for the first time. Conveying her best wishes with the promise of her prayers, she reiterated that VIVAT is a very important ministry to be the voice for the people. VIVAT had a very special place in her heart.

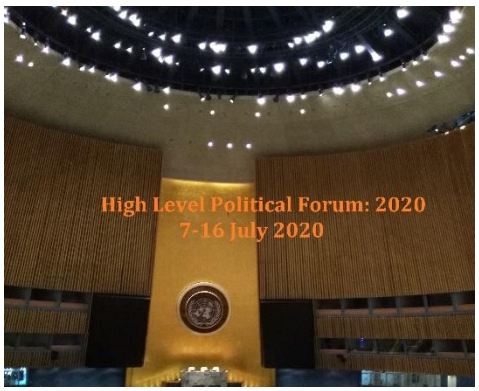
On 12 March 2020, Sr. Agada completed her earthly journey and went to Eternity. Her passing away is a great loss. However, her presence is undying, her zealous commitment inspiring, and her footprints are here to stay. This year, as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of VIVAT, we thank Sr. Agada for her leadership, zeal, deep faith, commitment, and fidelity.

Thank you, Sr. Agada! Your presence lives on!

Helen Saldanha SSpS, VIVAT International

THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF): 7 - 16 JULY 2020

The annual HLPF event aims at reviewing the progress made in the achievement of the 2030 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2019, after 4 years, the HLPF was held both at ECOSOC and the General Assembly levels. Not only did the member states realize that the international community is lagging in the achievement of SDGs but also the need for robust action. The political Declaration adopted during the HLPF set out a goal to focus on a decade of development towards the realization of the SDGs. COVID-19 Pandemic has widened the existing gap as each country is faced with multiple challenges. In the candid words of António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, 'The COVID-19 crisis is having devastating impacts because of our past and present failures. Because we have yet to take the SDGs seriously. Because we have put up with inequalities within and between countries that have left billions of people just one crisis away from poverty and financial ruin.'



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the High-Level meetings and side events were held on a virtual platform and were live-streamed on UN Web TV. The total viewership in various sessions is estimated to be 70000. Only a small number of registered select delegates could attend some meetings in person.

The HLPF deliberated on the theme, "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development" where all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were reviewed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The member states reflected on how the international community can respond to the pandemic effectively in the spirit of multilateralism and cooperation during and after the pandemic to build back better for achieving the SDGs. Since it was virtual the pre-recorded statements by the Heads of the State were presented. 47 countries presented the voluntary national reviews (VNRs). Serious concerns were raised by the developing countries and the least developed countries on the issue of a universal approach to addressing the pandemic, developmental assistance to the poorer countries, and multi-lateral approach especially in the area of dealing with increased extreme poverty, hunger, and health. Throughout the forum, there was an urgency for the international community to act with greater commitment and multilateral cooperation. 270 million people currently experiencing extreme food insecurity. The Pandemic has pushed millions of people to extreme poverty and 55% of the world's population do not benefit from any form of social protection. It is imperative to increase Social Protection benefits specially to the vulnerable groups.

At the conclusion of the event, Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General said that we can turn this around if we stay true to the 2030 Agenda even though the road is steeper. She reiterated the need for solidarity and foresight on financing, and greater investments in social protection, health systems, education, water, sanitation, and digital connectivity.

Even as the Member States discussed this virtually and despite the call for multilateralism, in times of the pandemic, the Declaration was deferred and remains as a draft.

VIVAT participated in the NGO Major Group meetings and gave feedback on the HLPF Ministerial Declaration. (https//sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26780MD_2020_HLPF_HLS.pdf) VIVAT also joined the civil society advocacy meetings that asked the member states to ensure meaningful participation of the civil society in the virtual meetings. An advocacy letter was submitted to the Member states to give more space to the civil society in the process of virtual deliberations.

Helen Saldanha, VIVAT International

UN@75: THE FUTURE WE WANT, THE FUTURE WE NEED

The United Nations (UN) came into existence in 1945 amid the ravages of World War II for harmony and peace among the nations and to save future generations from the scourge of war. A global organization that began with 51-member states, now has 193 members.

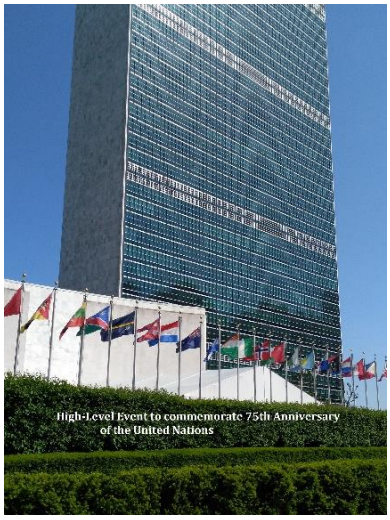
The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the UN and its founding Charter signed on 26 June 1945. It comes amid an unprecedented global crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts. However, it is a time to celebrate the fact the major wars have been avoided since 1945, even as we see the increased threats to peace and harmony among the nations.

The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism was the theme of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UN. As the year unfolded with the adverse impact COVID-19 Pandemic across the world, addressing the theme through the lens of recovery was an integral part of the deliberations.

A High-level meeting to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations was held on 21 September 2020. It was a time for remembering the ravages of world war II, and the need for multi-lateral engagement amidst the complex divisions that confront the international and national fronts today.

As a preparation for the celebration, in January 2020, wide-reaching conversations were held through dialogues and surveys, responded by over a million, highlighted people's hopes and fears for the future. The respondents prioritized access to basic services namely education, healthcare, safe water, and sanitation; increased solidarity and support to help tackle poverty, hunger, inequalities, and unemployment. The

priorities also included the action towards climate change, human rights, corruption, enhanced multilateralism, international cooperation, and solidarity. The results were displayed during the high-level event on 21 September 2020, where the member states reaffirmed the need for multilateralism and dialogue to solve any and every problem confronting the world. A Political Declaration was adopted during this virtual event.



Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General urged for a revitalized multilateralism in an increasingly divided world where cooperation and dialogue are a necessity. Highlighting various achievements of the UN, he stressed the need of strengthening the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. His concern was clear as he said "Climate calamity looms, biodiversity is collapsing, poverty is rising, hatred is spreading, geopolitical tensions are escalating, nuclear weapons remain on hair-trigger alert." He called for the need to address extreme poverty and climate change and good governance that included civil society, cities, businesses, youth, and local governments.

Reflecting on the UN, it can be said that without this structure it would be have been possible to keep the world free of major wars. Yes, at certain times there is cynicism about the role of the United Nations, especially there is a need for instance solution/addressing a serious issue. However, I believe that the United Nations is relevant at all times. There are discords, conflicts, power struggles, attacks on human rights. However, the UN is the only place for multilateralism, even as we know its functioning is not ideal. There are several achievements in recent years such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, Global compact for Migration, Paris Agreement, Refugee Conventions, treaties, etc. Failure to mobilize the necessary resources to implement and hold countries accountable is a great concern,

"We the Peoples…" is a powerful proclamation of people's power. Universal Declaration of Human Rights is remarkably a blueprint that we can fall back to. Its significance and relevance always beckon the leaders, policymakers, civil society groups, and every human being. The enactment of several legislations at the country levels flows from the commitments made here at the UN.

As compared to the earlier times, the civil society and other stakeholders' spaces are curtailed. The pandemic has furthered this. The civil society and faith-based organizations submitted a Statement to the Member states to call for strengthening civil society participation in the post-COVID-19 era (https://paxchristi.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/201023-PCI-statement-75-years-UN-final-version-EN-.pdf

As Faith-based NGOs, our role is to make a difference in the best way we can. Our presence as Civil society organizations enabled us to contribute our bit to the policy development on various themes such as migration, empowerment of women and girls, decent work, social protection, anti-human trafficking, climate change, and indigenous peoples. What we bring to the UN is the experiences of thousands of our people striving to empower themselves and of our members. It is surely an uphill task to advocate for change. We are small actors but what we do together in solidarity yields fruit.

More information:
https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un75_final_report_shapingourfuturetogether.pdf
https://www.un.org/en/un75/commemoration

UN SUMMIT ON BIODIVERSITY: ADDRESSING SDG 15

The UN Biodiversity Summit was a high-level event held on 30 September 2020 under the theme, 'Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development'. It was the first of its kind which aimed to highlight the need to accelerate global efforts to address the alarming issues of degradation of biodiversity. The Sustainable Development Goal 15 with its specific targets addressed the issue of life on land, to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss. This meeting highlighted the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for protecting ecosystems. It also positions the international community in the direction of "living in harmony with nature" – the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. This year like in every deliberation at the UN the summit was also seen in the context of the current pandemic which is one of the infectious diseases originating from animals due to climate-related pressures.

The Speakers warned that biodiversity loss threatens food security, water supplies, and livelihoods, as well as our ability to fight diseases and face extreme events. While all the SDGs are interconnected, Climate change (SDG13), Life below water (SDG14), Life on land (SDG15) and Clean water and sanitation (SDG6) can be identified as environment-related goals. As a part of Civil society, we can focus on accelerating the progress in SDG15 and other SDGs by localizing SDGs, influencing governments especially at the local level to allocate resource and support sustainable land use and agriculture, strengthening initiatives towards restoring degraded land, sharing of best practices, strengthening of women land-users and farmers, etc.

Web links:

https://www.un.org/pga/75/united-nations-summit-on-biodiversity/
https://www.cbd.int/article/2020-UN-Biodiversity-Summit

THE PANDEMIC AND THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN AT RISK: A RESPONSE

Children, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds bear the maximum brunt of the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of their rights are curtailed or taken away entirely, especially their right to development. Many experts predicted an exceedingly high number of school dropouts during this academic year and further that the drop-out rate would be higher among girl children. NDTV 24x7 highlighted on 15 and 16 August that many children are turning to manual labor in many parts of the country as the schools are shut. On 17 August, The Times of India reported that child marriage in Maharashtra soared during the lockdown. Though the schools are doing their bit to save the year for the children by conducting online classes and sending lessons through social media, the digital divide is so deep that many children, especially the poor ones and those from rural areas and children from tribal communities and nomads are unable to access these facilities. And, what is baffling is that not many people are even discussing it.

The team of Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune, a social outreach initiative of SVD India Mumbai Province, a member of VIVAT, came to know in the second week of June that the homeless families living on the streets in Pune city who were placed in different shelter homes during the stringent lockdown in April and May 2020 by the Municipal Corporation, were sent back to the streets in the first week of June. Ever since the team learned about it, the team began to move around in the city and the outskirts reaching out to the families living on the streets with groceries, face masks, hygiene materials, homeopathic immunity booster, etc.; alongside family and community awareness measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. After two rounds of this intervention, the team supported nearly 50 families to begin a micro livelihood activity of their choice for self-reliance.

The schools remained shut as the lockdown continued in July and in August, but most schools began online classes and sent out online study materials on digital platforms. However, the children living on the streets who do not have the necessary gadgets could not access these study materials. The team met over a hundred such children living on the streets of Pune and children of nomads. Due to extended lockdowns, Sarva Seva Sangh could not begin the regular mobile school (School on wheels) program for street children either. Therefore, to keep these children linked to the education they were given workbooks containing the basics, with which the children can do self-study, and notebooks and slates from the third week of August.

Simultaneously, foreseeing the possibility of high school drop-out of children in vulnerable situations, Sarva Seva Sangh also submitted a letter to the education department of Pune Municipal Corporation, extending support to schools to get children back to schools when the schools begin to function regularly. The team has also begun efforts to connect children living on the streets and in poor settlements with their schoolteachers so that they can obtain the books and other benefits provided by the Municipal Corporation and remain in touch with teachers, which would reduce the rate of school drop-out to a great extend in this pandemic year.

We hope that people in power elicit more discussion on child right violations and issues related to education and development of children in general, and children at risk, as we commit to doing our bit by calling the attention of the local authorities and concerned people and organizations to initiate remedial measures with a sense of urgency.

Mathews Korattyil SVD, India

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE: RESILIENCE AND SOLIDARITY

The members of VIVAT International, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters are operating in Odisha and other States of Eastern India. Our experience of working with marginalized communities during these unprecedented times is sometimes overwhelming. Here we share with you some of our experiences of assisting the migrants fleeing lockdowns, fleeing from cities only to encounter worst situations, something like from pan to fire.

Odisha is a sending State when it comes to internal labor migration. People travel to the urban cities of other states. Women migrants from indigenous communities mostly engage in domestic work. Most of them leave

their families in the place of origin. Since Odisha is a state that is sending many people for work outside its state, we work with people in migration and poverty to support them to be in a safe condition.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns affect everyone everywhere, its worst impacts are borne by the poorest. Anne Nuorgam, the Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues recently has urged the Member States and the international community to include the specific needs and priorities of indigenous peoples in addressing the global outbreak of COVID 19. The sufferings of indigenous peoples, especially the migrant population in cities and urban centers were unfathomable. Sudden lockdowns meant no food security, no work, no income, and no shelters. Many of them and desperately set out to go back to their places of origin fearing the worst due to unemployment, starvation, and fear of COVID 19 infection. Sadly. transport was a major issue forcing them to walk, something that was almost impossible to do given the distance.

Saftety regulations to Migants

Supporting stranded people in migration with available means of transport

The plight of the stranded people in almost all cities to get home was heart-rending. The news flashed in the media, and the families at the source were worried. We contacted the families and learned more about the situation of stranded migrants. We found that 13 groups of migrant workers, the natives of Odisha were in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Delhi, Mumbai, Telengana, and Kerala.

When we were contacted to extend our support to the returning migrants, we connected and networked at the places of destination and source with Church leaders, Religious Sisters, and people in different parts of India for their survival and safe return.

We also provided cooked and dry food to 9971 migrant workers who were on the way to their homes in the villages of Bondamunda, Gomardih, Bhubaneswar, and Duburi. Travel arrangements and financial assistance were given for 150 migrants and their children to reach their destination. As we started to network, we experienced the generosity of many faith-based organizations. We distributed masks and sanitary kits. They were available to reach out with their time, resources. We worked with the local administration, especially with the police, for the migrants who were walking towards their home places for many days and got their support in arranging transportation.

We make effort to be in touch with them to know their current situation. 32 of them shared about their experiences of difficulties, isolation, fear, helplessness, uncertainty, frustration, loss of jobs, and money.

The challenges are many with no end in sight yet. We continue with our efforts to connect with those who have returned and are unemployed and exploring livelihood options. There is also a continued dialogue with the Government and Nongovernmental organizations as well as individuals.

Sophia M. Arockia Mary, India

COVID-19, VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENTS IN CABO DELGADO, MOZAMBIQUE

Cabo Delgado is the northernmost province of Mozambique. It has an area of 82,625 km and a population of 2,320,261 (2017)— as well as bordering the neighboring country of Tanzania. Cabo Delgado province is extraordinarily rich in minerals (ruby, graphite, diamonds…) and gas. In recent years, with government support, large multinational corporations have acquired areas for exploration and are developing large exploration projects.

Since 2017, the province has been fighting between the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces and Islamist militants as part of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado. They are now termed terrorists, and it is considered a warlike situation affecting the wellbeing of people. There is a sense of unrest and public calamity. Data shows that more than 1,500 people are killed and 500,000, displaced. The attacks also resulted in severely damaged infrastructure, causing disruptions in access to those most in need. The families had to abandon everything and flee homes to save life. They tried to resist, but they could not do it for long, as the violence escalated by the day. Many were left with only what they were wearing and had to forgo everything including all valuable documents. The situation is even more worrisome as Cabo Delgado has the second-highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the country, with more than half of children under the age of five chronically malnourished. The COVID- 19 Pandemic had added immensely to the already distressing crisis. With the province currently recording the second-highest number of COVID-19 cases in Mozambique, population displacements have the potential to accelerate the spread of Coronavirus as well.

In this frightening situation, the number of families looking for shelter in various villages is increasing day by day. The Bishop of the Diocese of Pemba has been the voice for the affected people. He has constantly called for attention and solidarity at national and international levels. The dioceses, through Caritas, Justice, and Peace groups (JPICs) and the Migrants' Commission, have developed actions to care for the displaced and working to raise funds or develop projects for more immediate assistance.

In the diocese of Nacala, next to Pemba, we the VIVAT members belonging to Divine Word Missionaries and Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters work in five parishes. We, along with the Caritas of the Diocese formed several teams to reach out in the area where the displaced people are finding shelters and providing the much-needed assistance. According to the official report of 19/10, more than 9000 people had already arrived in the districts of the Diocese, mostly children and women, in a total of 1703 families. Our parish communities have also, despite their poverty, contributed mats, old cloths, dried Tapioca moong other things. We have regularly reached out to the displaced persons once a month as we work and pray for unity and peace in Mozambique.

Beena Paul, Mozambique

CALM BEFORE THE STORM: BROTHER GÜNTHER IS PREPARING HIS HOSPITAL FOR CORONA

A Missionary in Uganda interviewed about protective measures and overcharging prices

Savannah in lockdown: Strict protective measures paralyze public life in Uganda – with dramatic consequences not only for the Comboni missionary Günther Nährich, who has to buy medical equipment for "his" hospital in the northeast of the country.

The World Health Organization (WHO) currently reports 350 corona cases for Uganda. With a population of over 42 million people, this seems little, although the number of unreported cases is likely to be significantly higher. The country is hardly prepared for a major outbreak. That is why the government early adopted strict measures to contain the pandemic. Brother Günther Nährich MCCJ is also directly affected. The Comboni missionary from Bopfingen in Baden-Württemberg heads the St. Kizito Hospital in Matany in the northeast of the country. Comboni Sisters founded the Health Unit in 1967 which was gradually expanded to a 250-bed Hospital, distributed to children's, medical, surgical, maternity, and tuberculosis ward as well as the interior and surgery department. A nursing and midwifery school is affiliated with it. The hospital is located in one of the poorest regions in the country. As managing director, Brother Günther is responsible for all non-medical and nursing activities. This ranges from keeping personnel files to procuring clinical thermometers - which can be a challenge in times of the corona pandemic, as he reports in the interview.

Question: What are the state measures against the spread of the virus in Uganda?

Nährich: Even before the first corona patient was registered in Uganda, schools and universities were closed on March 19 and 20. This also affected our nursing and midwifery school. There can be no more public meetings. Passenger and air traffic were stopped, the borders and most of the shops closed. Access to grocery stores and markets is only granted with the necessary distance. Later, the government also imposed a curfew at night, which is enforced rigorously along with the ban on assemblies. The measures taken to combat the pandemic can be felt everywhere.

Question: How does this affect people's everyday lives?

Nährich: The usual greeting with a handshake is prohibited. This inevitably leads to a distance between people - and living together changes. The country seems paralyzed. Also, food prices have risen so much that they are no longer affordable for ordinary people. Some have to settle for simple wild leafy vegetables that grow everywhere during the current rainy season. In the cities, these price increases are driving many people into starvation because they have been unable to stock food items. The urban population has grown dramatically in recent decades. Most people live in slums in confined spaces and earn their living from casual jobs and street trading. Now the livelihood for day laborers is lost, there is no substitute. Uganda has no social structures to accommodate the victims of the crisis and no resources to back up the dramatic consequences for businesses. On a positive note, the government has started to distribute food such as corn flour, beans, and salt to needy populations in Kampala and the suburbs. The sick is given additional foods such as sugar and milk powder. This is a good start, but many people in need - especially in the countryside - are never reached.

Question: Do the government measures also have an impact on your everyday work?

Nährich: The lockdown has led to a **sharp drop in** the number of patients in the Hospital. Only 60 to 65 percent of the beds are currently occupied. We have a large catchment area. Due to the ban on public and private transport, patients from remote areas cannot reach the hospital. We continue to maintain an emergency ambulance service. But it is the rainy season and during heavy rains, our cars sometimes get stuck in the mud, so they have to be freed with a tractor. Because the work in the hospital continues regularly and there are other tasks to be done, my everyday life is not restricted. However, the procurement of medicines and sundries is becoming more and more difficult as supplies are dwindling and prices have risen enormously. An infrared thermometer, for example, at 90 Euros in February, was offered at the end of March for 325 Euros.

Question: Are corona patients already being treated in your hospital or are there preparations for the first cases?

Nährich: There are still no corona patients here in Matany and the entire Karamoja region. However, we have gradually prepared for the first cases. Initially, hand washing facilities were set up at the entrance to the Hospital, as well as in front of the various wards and offices. Also, all patients who come to the outpatient clinic are asked to answer a questionnaire and their temperature is measured. We have limited the number of patient attendants and visitors. We have set up an isolation ward and the staff who volunteered to care for affected patients have been trained. Unfortunately, there is a lack of protective equipment. The small stock lasts for a maximum of two weeks. A "Corona Task Force" led by the health department meets in the District Headquarters each week, in which our Medical Superintendent and representatives of our primary health care team also participate.

Question: What is the situation in the Christian communities? Are there still services or the sacraments being donated?

Nährich: No services have been held in Uganda since the lockdown in March. Administration of sacraments was also postponed. All 217 young people who were prepared for and were looking forward to the baptism during the Easter Vigil celebration had to be suspended. Various Parishes offer online services, especially in cities where people have internet access. Here in the countryside, readings, short sermons, and spiritual chants are broadcasted over loudspeakers on Sundays.

Question: What does this mean for the believers?

Nährich: Not being able to attend a service means a serious turning point for the people of Matany. For many who fill the great church during two services Sunday after Sunday, the celebration together is the central event of the day and their practice of faith. For this, they dress with care, participate with great enthusiasm, bring in their wonderful, moving songs, and express their joy with dancing, clapping, and loud cheers. Community and solidarity are strengthened and also express themselves specifically in the fact that the little that people have is shared in the collection.

Question: How is the life of faith in your community?

Nährich: In Matany we celebrate every Sunday the Eucharist as an apostolic community - that is, together with the two sister communities - in the courtyard of the Mission. We keep social distance as this rule applies also here. During the week the Eucharist is celebrated alternately in the different communities; we also maintain the Daily morning and Evening Prayers. Also, during this Corona period, we Comboni Missionaries in Uganda keep one hour of adoration every evening in which we pray for the end of the pandemic and also feel connected to our sisters and brothers in the Parish and worldwide.

Question: What is your perspective for the next few months?

Nährich: According to media reports, there are now 350 Covid-19 infections in Uganda. Many of them are said to have already recovered. There are no reports about people who have succumbed to the disease. However, this broadcast cannot make us feel relaxed. There is too little testing and mortality is high in the country anyway. For this reason, these official statements are hardly worth the paper they are printed on. We will continue our journey here with caution and prudence and also with confidence. We do our part to avoid worse things. We also ask God to avert the pandemic from humanity here and everywhere in the world. In this attitude and in this way, we realize our motto: We dress the wound - God heals it.

By Cornelius Stiegemann, Matany / Bonn / 06.06.2020

© Ernst Zerche The Comboni missionary Günther Nährich heads a hospital in Matany, in the northeast of Uganda

© Ernst Zerche The Comboni missionary Günther Nährich heads a hospital in Matany, in the northeast of Uganda. Here he speaks to two of his employees.

© Ernst Zerche A priest blesses a new ambulance from St. Kizito Hospital in Matany. Brother Günther Nährich is in the background.

Source:

[Cornelius Stiegemann, Matany/Bonn – Katholisch.de]

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

1 October: International Day of Older Persons (A/RES/45/106)

2 October: International Day of Non-Violence (A/RES/61/271)

4 October: World Habitat Day (A/RES/40/202 A)

11 October: International Day of the Girl Child (A/RES/66/170)

13 October: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/64/200)

15 October: International Day of Rural Women (A/RES/62/136)

16 October: World Food Day (A/RES/35/70)

17 October: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (A/RES/47/196)

24 October: United Nations Day (A/RES/168 (II); A/RES/2782 (XXVI))

16 November: International Day for Tolerance (UNESCO 28 C/Resolution 5.61; A/RES/51/95)

25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women(A/RES/54/134)

1 December: World AIDS Day

2 December: International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (A/RES/317(IV))

3 December: International Day of Persons with Disabilities (A/RES/47/3)

5 December: World Soil Day (A/RES/68/232)

10 December: Human Rights Day (A/RES/423 (V))

18 December: International Migrants Day (A/RES/55/93)

SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Human life depends on the earth as much as the ocean for our sustenance and livelihoods.

- Plant life provides 80 percent of the human diet, and we rely on agriculture as an important economic resource.
- Forests cover 30 percent of the Earth's surface, provide vital habitats for millions of species, and important sources for clean air and water, as well as being crucial for combating climate change.
- Every year, 13 million hectares of forests are lost, while the persistent degradation of drylands has led to the desertification of 3.6 billion hectares, disproportionately affecting poor communities.
- While 15 percent of the land is protected, biodiversity is still at risk. Nearly 7,000 species of animals and plants have been illegally traded. Wildlife trafficking not only erodes biodiversity, but creates insecurity, fuels conflict, and feeds corruption
- Urgent action must be taken to reduce the loss of natural habitats and biodiversity which are part of our common heritage and support global food and water security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and peace and security. (Source: UNDP)

The Goal has 12 targets to be achieved by 2030. 9 targets focus on the outcome and the last three, on methods of achieving goal and outcome targets.

15.1: Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems

15.2: End deforestation and restore degraded forests

15.3: End desertification and restore degraded land

15.4: Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems

15.5: Protect biodiversity and natural habitats

15.6: Protect access to genetic resources and fair sharing of the benefits

15.7: Eliminate poaching and trafficking of protected species

15.8: Prevent invasive alien species on land and in water ecosystems

15.9: Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity in governmental planning

15.a: Increase financial resources to conserve and sustainably use ecosystem and biodiversity

15.b: Finance and incentivize sustainable forest management

15.c: Combat global poaching and trafficking

Web links:

https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15

https://www.globalgoals.org/15-life-on-land

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030-goal15.html