

# NGO NEWS

## *Sisters of Charity Federation*

### Charity Federation UN Orientation



**Sisters from member congregations attending the first UN Orientation designed for the Federation**

The Partnership for Global Justice offers the United Nations (UN) Orientation program several times during the year and a number of Federation members have participated.

The UN Orientation covers a range of issues including, but not limited to, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), human trafficking, financing

for development, issues of indigenous populations, global spirituality and Catholic Social Teaching. It also provides the opportunity to visit the UN, the mission of the United States to the UN and the mission of another country.

At a meeting with leadership last year there was an interest expressed in having an

orientation program that would also include our Vincentian charism. So from March 31-April 2nd there was a program designed for the Sisters of Charity Federation leadership which included elements of our Vincentian charism and how it is integrated into the work of the Vincentian family at the UN.

### UN Conference on Economic Crisis

The United Nations is convening a three-day summit of world leaders from 24 to 26 June 2009 at its New York Headquarters to assess the worst global economic downturn since the Great Depression. The aim is to

identify emergency and long-term responses to mitigate the impact of the crisis, especially on vulnerable populations, and initiate a needed dialogue on the transformation of the international financial architecture, taking into

account the needs and concerns of all Member States. The UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development will provide a uniquely inclusive forum to address issues of urgent (p.3)

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- Alternative Gift Giving Update

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## NGO Office Sponsors Pachamama Side Event

One of the possibilities afforded to NGOs with Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) status is hosting side events during the Commissions. These events are designed to highlight best practices or introduce participants to new ideas and/or organizations that are relevant to the themes of the Commissions.

The Sisters of Charity Federation hosted the Pachamama Alliance during both the Commission for Social Development and the Commission for Sustainable Development. The goal of the Pachamama Alliance is "To bring forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence on the planet as a guiding principle of our

time."

I had the opportunity to participate in a Pachamama Alliance Symposium last year and the words of the indigenous elder from Ecuador to a group of aid workers from the north still resonates with me. "If you are coming here to help us, don't waste your time. But if your liberation is tied up with ours than we can work together for the benefit of all." The Alliance, which is now world-wide, includes people from both the North and South.

The side event offered members of the Alliance the opportunity to share their vision to hospice the old structures and



midwife the new ones. The presentation offered a new vision and invited participants to connect their passions with what is needed in the world today.

The Federation also facilitated the participation of members of the Alliance in the Civil Society Forum held before the Commission for Social Development.

## Quadrennial Report

Every four years the organizations who are accredited by ECOSOC are required to send in a report of the activities of the NGO representative as well as activities of member congregations. This was our year to complete the quadrennial report.

From the Introductory Statement: "The Federation became affiliated with the

ECOSOC as a non-governmental organization with Special Consultative Status in 2001. This affiliation has provided a means of collaboration through which we work to bring about systemic and structural change so as to eliminate the root causes of poverty."

The report goes on to detail our participation in the Commissions for Social

Development, Status of Women, Sustainable Development and the Permanent Forum on the Rights of the Indigenous through the sponsorship of interventions and side events. It also names the various committees of which our NGO is a part.

The last section indicates how our Federation has worked to alleviate (p. 3)

## Resources

The NGO section of the Sisters of Charity Federation website ([www.sisters-of-charity-federation.org](http://www.sisters-of-charity-federation.org)) has been updated and includes new resources under the following headings: Peace, Human Trafficking, Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees, Climate Change/Environment, Education, MDGs and Poverty Eradication and Micro-financing. Check it out.

### Books

Speth, James Gustave. *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability (2008)* -Contemporary capitalism and a habitable planet cannot coexist. That is the core message of *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, by Speth, a prominent environmentalist who, in this book, has turned sharply critical of the environmental movement. Speth faults environ-

mentalists for assuming they alone hold the key to arresting the deterioration of the planet. That task, he emphasizes, will require the involvement of activists working on campaign finance reform, corporate accountability, labor, human rights and environmental justice, to name a few.

### Websites:

[www.wcrp.org](http://www.wcrp.org)— This site offers excellent toolkits on poverty eradication and more.

## Update on Our Alternative Gift Giving 2008

This past Christmas Federation engaged in an alternative gift-giving project in support of International Associations of Charity (AIC) Nigeria. Nkiru Aronu, the President of the organization, spoke at the Department of Public Information (DPI) conference in Paris about the work of her organization with widows and children and their need for financial help for micro-financing projects. Through the generosity of our members we sent a check to her for \$5,000. The following is a recent email I received from Nkiru:

"My dear Sr. CJ, how are you? It has been long since we spoke. I have been so busy with my project with the women. Thank

God about forty women have benefited from your fund, though, we still have more than fifty something who have not got anything in our list due to lack of fund. Those that have gotten some are in groundnut farming, oil storage and selling of food-stuffs, articles etc. Pictures and activity report I will bring to you in Cameroun.

Sr. CJ, the joy and jubilations of these women do bring back to me the memories of our stay at the Daughters in Rue du Bac Paris. I really thank God for making our paths to cross. I will never forget you and what you did for me to put a smile on the faces of these poor women." (what we did!)



**The women of AIC Nigeria who work with the widows and children.**

## UN Conference on Economic Crisis cont'd

concern to all nations. Recent assessments of the impact of the ongoing economic crisis increasingly highlight the deteriorating social and political fallout in the least developed countries and middle-income countries as well. Prospects for an early recovery have faded, forcing countries to prepare for a prolonged downturn in trade, investment and employment.

In 2009 global economic growth has

entered negative territory. Credit flows have dried up and major investment firms and lending institutions have been wiped off the map. Jobs are disappearing by more than a million a month, according to the International Labour Organization, and trade has dropped at the steepest rate since the Great Depression, the World Trade Organization observed.

The situation in the world's developing countries – which contributed least to the crisis and are most severely affected – has led some economists to warn of "lost decades for development" which could have catastrophic consequences for rich and poor countries alike.

Sr. Marie Elena Dio, SC (Halifax) will represent the Federation at the meeting.

## Quadrennial Report cont'd

poverty through financial support, initiating projects and/or providing personnel throughout Central America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, South America and areas of poverty throughout the United States and Canada. Activities include:

- \* Financial support and administrative oversight for water and sanitation projects in Peru, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, India and Nepal;

- \*Financial support and staffing for micro-financing programs for women in Nigeria, Malawi, Haiti, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and India;

- \*Providing scholarships to the Coady Institute in Canada for people from developing countries;

- \*Participating in a new initiative of Health and Education in Sudan;

- \*Providing transitional housing for those living in poverty in the U.S.

- \*Opening a Peace Center and initiating computer-based literacy education in Guatemala;

- \*Providing financial support for educational programs in Tanzania and Ghana;

- \*Providing university scholarships for single mothers in Canada;

These are only a few of the activities of the Federation. To view the entire report go to our federation website at:

[www.sisters-of-charity-federation.org](http://www.sisters-of-charity-federation.org) .

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### Sister Cj's Summer Schedule:

June 18th—Cincinnati to visit national exhibit on  
“Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America”

June 20-24—Emmitsburg, Maryland for Federation  
leadership and liaison meetings.

June 24-28—Mount St. Joseph, Ohio for congrega-  
tional retreat on the “Sacred Web of Creation”.

June 29-July 2nd—Congregational small group  
meeting at the Motherhouse.

July 5-29th—Kenya and Cameroon, Africa

July 31-August 2nd—Nazareth, Kentucky

August 3rd—Return to office.

### Mission Statement

Impelled by Christ's love and joined together in the mission of Charity, we, the Sisters of Charity Federation, respond to the cries of those who are poor and marginalized.

### Vision Statement

Impelled by the Gospel charism of Charity, we commit ourselves to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who are poor and marginalized. We will use the energy of our love, the gifts and talents of the members of our communities, and our material and spiritual resources to collaborate in the creation of systemic change locally and globally for the common good of all.

## Our Vincentian Charism at the UN

The Vincentian Family at the United Nations is represented by Sr. Germaine Price, DC, Sr. Caroljean Willie, SC, Fr. Joe Foley, CM, Sr. Faith Colligan, DC, Sr. Marie Elena Dio, SC, Sr. Janet McLaughlin, SC, and Madeleine Morrissey, AIC.

Their work at the United Nations enables them to:

- Express **solidarity** with those living in poverty and the marginalized;
- Use the **gifts and talents** of members of our communities;
- Use our **material and spiritual resources** to collaborate in creating systemic change;
- Work on **level of structures**, not just

in responding to particular situations; and

- Work to **confront injustice**.

They seek to follow in the footsteps of Vincent, Louise and Elizabeth who:

- ♦ Had a **vision of what was possible** and were unfailing in their efforts to transform the lives of those in need;
- ♦ Had the **courage of their convictions** and the **capacity to mobilize people and resources**;
- ♦ **Developed leadership skills among their followers** and empowered others to act;
- ♦ **Inspired** those who followed with dedication and vision;
- ♦ **Listened** to others and **sought** their

**ideas and advice;**

- ♦ **Provided tools** needed to perform the mission; and
- ♦ Gave us enduring models of **servant leadership**.

