

NGO NEWS

Sisters of Charity Federation

NGO Liaisons Gather in Greensburg

Volume 4 Issue 2

July 2010

The liaisons from each of the member congregations of the Federation gathered in Greensburg, Pennsylvania at Seton Hill University from June 14-15, 2010 to review the work of the NGO office from the past year and chart new initiatives for the coming year.



It was decided that there will no longer be a monthly alert on a specific date, but alerts will come out when there is a major issue around which we want to mobilize.

Periodic educational materials will be disseminated in order to update members on initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), climate change, the empowerment of women and other current topics.

Newsletters will continue quarterly, but there will also be periodic one-page updates on major world events through the lens of the United Nations (UN).

In the coming months Sisters will be given the opportunity to indicate if they would like to be on separate email lists for specific issues such as

migration, trafficking, the environment, poverty eradication, education, peace and disarmament among others. When information becomes available, those on the lists will receive it immediately.

We will also be sponsoring a Vincentian Family UN Orientation from September 28-30, 2010.

MDG Review

In preparation for the Summit to review the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which will be held in September, hearings were held for civil society contributions to the process.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon contends that a holistic approach to the MDGs is essential. He noted that a piecemeal approach could lead to unintended consequences, such as young

people who receive better education and health services, but confront an economic system that does not provide jobs.

(cont'd on p. 3)

*Vincentian Family
UN Orientation
September 28-30, 2010*

Commission Dates

*Social Development
2-11 February 2011*

*Status of Women
1-12 March 2011*

*Sustainable Development
2-13 May 2011*

*Indigenous Rights
16-27 May 2011*

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Systemic Change and the Vincentian Family

The first ever virtual meeting of the Vincentian Family took place on April 24, 2010. More than 500 members of the Family gathered at locations throughout the United States and Canada to view a DVD entitled “Changing Systems, Changing Lives” about the nature of systemic change and the many ways it is already taking place in the ministries of the different branches of the Family.

A guide was provided for the site facilitators to promote dialogue among the participants and opportunities to share their experiences.

The Vincentian Family Collaborators, representing all the members of the Family, met in St. Louis in mid-June to evaluate the virtual meeting and to plan for the Canadian-U.S. Systemic Change workshop for leaders and trainers which will take place in Belleville, Illinois in early November. This workshop is similar to those which have taken place in Mexico, Brazil, Cameroon, and Thailand, but will look at systemic change through the lens of North American culture.

Each branch of the family has been invited to submit the names of participants

who are either leaders in their congregations/organizations or who can serve as trainers. The goal is to provide training to members of all branches of the Family so that the trainers can then begin training others in their geographic areas.

Elements of the training include an introduction to systemic change, systemic change in the works of St. Vincent de Paul, the Millennium Development Goals, Systemic Change and Catholic Social Teaching, criteria for systemic change projects and examples of systemic change in current Family projects.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Update

From June 28-July 2, 2010, the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum took place at UN Headquarters in New York. The theme was “Implementing the internationally agreed development goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.”

Noteworthy comments:

“Women are key contributors to development and agents of change.”

“Female education is essential.”

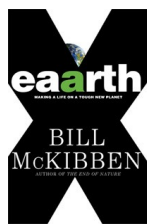
“Promoting gender equality is vital to the achievement of the MDGs and to security and peace.”

“Women need more decision-making power and more leadership roles in all countries.”

“Women play a vital role in combating violence and promoting peace.”

“Empower women as producers; they must have land, equipment, credit and technology.”

Resources



McKibben, Bill. *Eaarth*. Times Books, 2010.

Eaarth opens with the devastating conclusion that we no longer inhabit the world in which humans have flourished for most of human history. McKibben asserts that “we’ve passed the tipping point for dramatic climate change, and even if we could stop emissions yes-

terday, our world will keep warming, triggering more extreme storms, droughts, and other erratic catastrophes, for centuries to come.” Despite this bleak analysis, McKibben provides very concrete suggestions on how to cope with the changed world in which we live.

The 800 Mile Wall—DVD

This documentary film highlights the construction of the new border walls along

the U.S.-Mexico border as well as the effect on migrants trying to cross into the U.S. This powerful 90-minute film contends that the U.S. border strategy has failed, has ultimately led to the deaths of thousands of migrants, and violates fundamental human rights.

The documentary, which can be purchased for \$20, is available at:

www.800milewall.org

UN Renovation

The United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ) in New York City is undergoing major renovations. The original UN buildings, completed in 1951, do not meet current standards for safety.

When it reopens in 2013, the newly-renovated, six-building, 2.6 million-square-foot United Nations complex will be 50% more energy efficient, 40% more water efficient, but will look on the outside much as it did 59 years ago at the ribbon cutting. On the inside, though, the change on the office floors

“promises to be nothing short of profound,” according to a panel of the project’s architects and engineers.

Michael Adlerstein, an assistant secretary general of the UN, is heading the \$1.9 billion renovation effort. The reason for the change is largely driven by an effort “to get more light and air into the interior of a building that has been virtually unchanged since it opened in 1951,” the architects said. The open plan will also make it easier to efficiently use the space in an organization

that has grown from its original 50-member nation states to 192 today.

The first phase of the renovation, which involved moving almost all of the UN’s 6,000 full-time staffers to space scattered in office buildings across midtown, is now complete. In addition, the temporary North Lawn Building, on the lawn at the north end of the 17-acre complex, opened in December. It now houses the UN Secretariat and has five large conference rooms, a café and smaller meeting rooms.

Invitation to Participate in an Online Discussion

There will be an online discussion and podcast on gender, education and employment from July 7-20, 2010.

You are invited to participate in this online discussion on the linkages between women’s and girls’ access to and participation in formal and non-formal education and training, and their equal access to full employment and decent work.

The online discussion will take place in both English and French. It is organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Registration will open on July 7th.

Registered participants can post comments and also opt to follow the online discussion by email.

Register Today

at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw55/onlinediscussion.html>

MDG Review cont’d

The global economic crisis has negatively impacted the progress many countries have made. Factors such as food insecurity for millions of people in developing countries, the growing challenges of climate change, as well as both gender and economic inequalities are all factors affecting the MDGs.

While the first seven MDGs are the responsibility of the developing countries themselves, the eighth represents the commitment on the part of the developed countries to provide the necessary resources to facilitate their achievement.

Civil society is stressing the vital link

between human rights principles and development goals because reaching a development goal does not necessarily ensure human rights. For instance, a government may provide access to water, but if the water is not clean and drinkable, the people’s right to a decent standard of living is denied.

Sisters of Charity Federation

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Betty Marie Dunkel, DC from Los Altos enjoys a moment with Vincent and Louise at the liaison meeting.

Sisters of Charity Federation

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.



United Nations Orientation

More than 30 members of the Sisters of Charity Federation attended the third Federation UN Orientation from April 6-8, 2010.

Input sessions included information on the UN system, the Millennium Development Goals, Human Trafficking, Sustainable Development, Indigenous Peoples, Disarmament, Poverty and Homelessness, Financing for Development and Global Spirituality.

A panel on the Vincentian Family at the UN included short presentations from Faith Colligan, DC, Germaine Price, DC, Pat Connolly, DC, Joe Foley, CM and Caroljean Willie, SC.

Participants had the opportunity to visit the Haitian mission and learn about the concerns and issues facing their government as they cope with the aftermath of the earthquake and the beginning of the rainy season.

Sisters also visited the Canadian Mission and had the opportunity to discuss with Mission personnel their concerns about Canada's role in international affairs.

