

NGO NEWS

Sisters of Charity Federation

The Commission for Social Development

The Sisters of Charity Federation played a very active role at both the Civil Society Forum preceding the Commission and the Commission itself.

Sister Faith Colligan, DC, served as the co-chair for the Civil Society Forum whose theme was Poverty Eradication: Human Dignity Demands It!

Susan Saiyiorri from the micro-financing institution, Jamii Bora, in Kenya was sponsored by the Federation. She and NGO representative Sister Caroljean (Cj) Willie both spoke at an afternoon panel on microfinancing.

During the Commission Sisters Basanti Besra and Leena Kumari, SCNs from India, both contributed to a morning briefing on social protection in India.

The Federation co-sponsored two side events: one with



Student and faculty members from St. Elizabeth College in Convent Station, NJ at the Civil Society Forum

Susan on Jamii Bora and a second one entitled "Poverty and Climate Change: Voices from Government, the Grassroots, and NGOs." Sister Leena gave a presentation on "The Effect of Climate Change on Vulnerable Populations" and Sr. Cj spoke on "The Effect of Climate Change on Small Island States."

The Federation had more than 20 representatives at either the forum or Commission. Participants included a group of students and two faculty members from St. Elizabeth College.

Since this was not a policy year for the Commission, a Chair's Summary was the final outcome document, not resolutions.

Meet Leena Kumari, SCN

Sister Leena Kumari has served in our NGO Office as an intern for the past six weeks. She comes from Bihar, India where she has been working in a rural community with a literacy rate of less than 30%. Her primary work is with women and youth in the devel-

opment of small scale programs and trying to secure government aid to finance the programs. Without meaningful opportunities many of the youth turn to anti-social activities.

Leena attended both the Com-

mission for Social Development (see above) and the Commission on the Status of Women. Leena felt that her experiences enabled her to see how the UN functions and the different roles of delegates, ambassadors and NGOs. (cont'd p. 4)

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Dates to Remember

04/28-30/2011—Vincentian Family UN Orientation

05/02-13/2011—Commission for Sustainable Development

05/16-27/2011—Permanent Forum on the Rights of the Indigenous

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What Is the Social Protection Floor?

One of the main issues that continues to arise at the United Nations is the need for a Social Protection Floor (SPF). The SPF corresponds to a set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the global citizen should enjoy. It can be seen as a core obligation of ensuring the realization of minimum essential levels of rights embodied in human rights treaties. The two main elements that would help to realize these human rights are: 1) Ensuring the availability, continuity, and geographical and financial access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing and other social services such as life and asset

saving information; and 2) Realizing access by ensuring a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, to provide a minimum income and livelihood security for poor and vulnerable populations and to facilitate access to essential services. It includes social transfers (but also information, entitlements and policies) to children, people in active age groups with insufficient income and older persons.

The SPF promotes a holistic and coherent vision of national protection systems as a key component of national development strategies. It seeks to support countries in indentifying and closing crucial protection

gaps through coherent and efficient measures that maximize the effects of scarce resources on the reduction of poverty and insecurity, to ensure “guaranteed access” to essential services and social transfers.

The SPF will continue to be on the agenda as an essential tool in the eradication of poverty. Next year is the policy year on the theme of the eradication of poverty for the Commission for Social Development and the SPF will figure prominently in the recommendations of NGOs and, hopefully, in the resolutions passed by governments.

For more information see www.socialprotectionfloor.org

Did You Know?

- Global military spending for one year totals more than 1.5 trillion dollars. The cost of meeting all of the Millennium Development Goals is \$329 billion. The cost of military spending for one year could keep the UN funded for more than 700 years!
- The World Social Forum met in Dakar, Senegal (West Africa) from 6-11

February 2011. Leaders of both men’s and women’s religious communities are part of a coalition of faith-based groups supporting this global initiative. Forum participants include members of civil society committed to human and labor rights, gender equality and environmental responsibility. The World Social Fo-

rum offers an alternative to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland which draws major business and political leaders.

- Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria, according to World Bank data.

What Is Advocacy?

Advocacy is a primary role of the NGOs working at the United Nations.

“Advocacy is a planned, deliberate, sustained effort to raise awareness of an issue. It’s an ongoing process in which support and understanding are built incrementally over an extended period of time...” It involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause. The goal is to

provide alternative perspectives in an effort to effect changes in policy.

An advocate is one who speaks up for others; it may be an individual or an organization. At the UN, the Sisters of Charity Federation advocates on behalf of those living in poverty by collaborating with other NGOs in visiting missions, writing position papers, writing civil soci-

ety declarations, submitting written and/or oral interventions to the various Commissions, and by sponsoring side events and briefings to inform about best practices in the field of poverty eradication.

Networking is a key to successful advocacy. The more voices that speak up about an issue the more likely it is to be noted and acted on by decision-makers.

Commissions for Social Development (CSocD) and the Status of Women (CSW)



Susan presenting at Civil Society Forum



Susan, the Kenyan Ambassador, and Sr. Cj



Sr. Leena presenting at side event



Susan and Sr. Cj on microfinancing panel



Sr. Kati Hamm and Sr. Catherine Joseph



Federation members at CSocD



Participants with Leena at CSW



Sr. Faith and Sally Dunn, co-chairs



Sr. Basanti listens to a presentation

International Year of Forests 2011

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2011 as the International Year of Forests. Everyone from Governments and the UN System, to major groups and other forest-related organizations are invited to come together to raise awareness on strengthening the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. All organizations, from governments to

schools, are encouraged to hold activities in celebration of the Year.

Forest Facts:

Forests cover 31% of total global land area.

Forests store more than 1 trillion tons of carbon.

Over 1.6 billion people's livelihoods depend on forests.

Forests are home to 300 million people.

Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.



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Resources

Holman, Peggy. *Engaging Emergence: Turning Upheaval into Opportunity*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010. Ms. Holman offer principles, practices and real world stories to help deal with the constant changes in our world and in our lives with creativity, compassion and wisdom.

Scharmer, C. Otto. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010. An excellent tool for all those who are interested in leadership in both theory and practice. An invitation to see the world in new ways.

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.



Leena cont'd

She found the CSW exciting and informative. She found that many people are working on the multiple issues facing women, but patriarchal societies make it very difficult to achieve significant gains. However, she felt very hopeful listening to Michelle Bachelet, the new under-secretary general of UN Women, who talked about the reality of the status of women at the grassroots level. She also talked about the many forms of violence against women in society today.

Leena was encouraged to hear Ms. Bachelet speak about the need for women at the grassroots level to have a platform to express themselves and to participate in decision-making. "When we empower women we empower the family, community and society," said Ms. Bachelet.

The morning briefings, according to

Leena, were a great help in understanding what was going on and in helping to make choices as to which side events and commission activities to attend each day. There

were 275 side events during CSW.

The official launch of the new branch of the United Nations, UN Women, was held during the CSW.



Sr. Celine, MMS, Under-Secretary General Bachelet and Sr. Leena Kumari, SCN