



NGO News

Sisters of Charity Federation

Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 60

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It is the first international document to recognize and uphold human rights for all people everywhere.

The original draft document of the UDHR was written by John Peters Humphrey of Hampton, New Brunswick, Canada. In 1946 he was offered the first directorship of the Human Rights Division at the newly formed United Nations. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, asked Humphrey to write the preliminary draft of a Bill of Rights.

Today this Declaration, written in more than 360 languages, is written into the constitutions and laws of many countries. The document consists of 30 articles that outline basic freedoms and rights for all people.

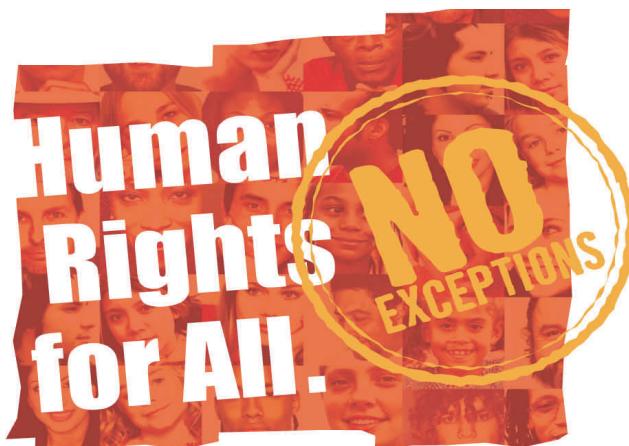


Sister Dorothy Stang Wins UN Award

Sr. Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN, will be among the seven who will be awarded the 2008 UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights. The award will be received posthumously by her brother David Stang and Sr. Joan Burke of the Notre Dame

de Namur NGO office. The honorary award is given to individuals or organizations once every five years for "outstanding achievements in the field of human rights". It represents an opportunity to give public recognition to the

political rights for all in articles 3 through 21. In articles 22-27, economic, social and cultural rights are stated and in the last three articles, a larger protective framework is shared in which all human rights are to be universally enjoyed. For a prayer service and suggested activities go to the federation website: www.sisters-of-charity-federation.org



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Special points of interest:

- Canadian Maritime Project
- Doha Conference on Financing for Development
- Commission on Social Development
- DPI Update
- The Vincentian Family
- Ways to Support the UN

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Historic Meeting Launches Federation Maritime Project

by Roma De Robertis, SCIC

Eight members of the Sisters of Charity Federation held a historic meeting at Moncton, New Brunswick on October 7, 2008 to launch the Charity Federation Maritime Project.

The initiative focuses on advocacy for women and children, highlighting adequate housing and social assistance for those living in poverty.

The core committee consists of one representative from each congregation: Sisters Aurea Cormier, NDSC (Moncton, chair); Franklyn Ferguson, CSM (Antigonish, secretary'); Helen Danahy, SC (Halifax, treasurer); and Roma de Robertis, SCIC (Saint

John, communications). One member of each congregation's leadership team was also present at the initial meeting. The gathering was facilitated and hosted by the NDSC.

The core committee also met in Saint John on November 7th and gave a presentation to local SCIC and Associates about the project's origin and mission.

The idea for the project began in Kentucky in June 2007, when leadership teams of the Charity Federation gathered in geographical groups to discuss the possibility of working on common projects.



Commission on Social Development

The 47th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from February 4-13, 2009. A Civil Society Forum will be held on February 3, 2009.

Social Integration is the priority theme for the 2009-2010 review and policy cycle, taking into account the relationship with poverty eradication and full employment and decent work for all.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) stresses that policies and strategies to achieve full employment and decent work for all should include specific measures to promote gender equality and foster social integration for social groups, such as youth, persons with disabilities, and older persons, as well as migrants and indigenous peoples.

ECOSOC reaffirms that social integration policies should seek to reduce inequalities,

promote access to basic social services, education for all and health care, and increase the participation and integration of social groups.

Anyone interested in attending the Commission on Social Development please contact Sister Cj at:
[\(cjwilliengo@gmail.com\)](mailto:cjwilliengo@gmail.com)

The registration deadline is January 6, 2009.

DPI Update

In September of each year the UN's Department of Public Information (DPI) and the NGO Community hold a joint conference on an appropriate theme. Traditionally the conference is held at UN Headquarters in New York City, but due to renovations the conference was held in Paris in 2008.

In 2009 the conference will be held in Mexico City and the theme will be Disarmament.

Every Thursday morning at the UN, DPI sponsors a briefing on an important topic for NGO representatives. On October 30th the topic was "Disarmament: Fresh Answers to Old Questions."

Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, said he was pleased that the matter is getting greater attention, both from governments and from civil society, and praised the growing international rec-

ognition of the implications of the arms trade on the Millennium Development Goals. He stressed that it is difficult to advance the goals in an environment where armed violence is fed by a seemingly endless supply of illicit weaponry. He emphasized that such a climate discourages new investment, erodes public confidence, destroys the rule of law, and diverts the scarce public funds so desperately needed to meet development needs.



Doha Conference on Financing for Development

by Faith Colligan, DC

A follow-up to the 2002 Monterey Conference on Financing for Development was held in Doha, Qatar in early December.

For the past several months the NGO community around the world has been engaged with Governments studying and reviewing the implementation of the six chapters of the Monterrey Consensus. The chapters cover: mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; mobilizing international resources for development; trade; enhancing international financial cooperation for development assistance; debt and systemic issues.

One of the most enriching features of the

review was the many opportunities afforded for gathering and sharing of the review process at each chapter, with NGOs working on financing for development from around the world. Civil Society Forums for each chapter held at UN Headquarters in New York were attended by our counterparts from Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. An interactive website allowed the sharing of published materials as well as blogging and discussion groups. These features had a tremendous impact on the formulation of the Civil Society Declaration produced by the NGO community.

The Civil Society Declaration is an intervention on the part of civil society to formally give input to the meeting with the hope of influencing the negotiations and the final outcome document agreed upon by the governments. There were 250 members of civil society attending the meeting in Doha. The Civil Society declaration called for "commitments, not fine intentions without a follow-up procedure; and a new institutional mechanism for financing for development backed by a strengthened mandate to the Secretary General."

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The Vincentian Family

As members of the Sisters of Charity Federation we are also part of a much larger family, the Vincentian Family. This family includes all of the members of the Federation: the Daughters of Charity (international), the Congregation of the Mission, the International Association of Charity (AIC), the St. Vincent de Paul Society International, Vincentian Marian Youth, the Association of the Miraculous Medal, the Ladies of Charity USA and the Mission-

ary Cenacle. We number more than 2 million members serving in over 130 countries.

Among the diverse services offered, many branches of the family are engaged in multiple systemic change initiatives rooted in the Vincentian tradition. This process involves those who are poor themselves in both the identification of their needs and in finding solutions to those needs. It also

Learn more about the Vincentian Family by going to the family website at:

www.famvin.org

ensures local ownership of development projects and facilitates human and technical capacity building.

Support the Work of the United Nations

- Use prayer and meditation to support the work of the United Nations.
- Encourage schools, federal, state and city offices as well as community businesses to fly the flag of the UN along with national, state, and local flags.
- Encourage youth participation in the work of the UN through Model UN programs.
- Write letters to the editor of local pa-
- pers about the work of the UN and the need to support it.
- Regularly visit and research the UN website at <http://www.un.org> and sign up to receive news alerts on subjects of interest.
- Engage family, friends and co-workers in conversation about the UN purpose, goals, achievements and current activities.



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Sisters of Charity Federation

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Commission Dates

Social Development: February 4-13, 2009

The Status of Women: March 2—13, 2009

Sustainable Development: May 4-15, 2009

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Rights:
 May 18-29, 2009

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.



Doha cont'd

It appealed for the protection of the marginalized, which is at the core of the Monterrey Consensus, and radical reform of the International Financial Institutions. It asserted that illegitimate debt must be cancelled. For more on the specifics of the declaration go to: www.un.org/esa/ffd/

The Outcome Document agreed on by the G-192, the designation given the countries attending the meeting, calls for a high level UN meeting on the world financial crisis to "review the current world financial architecture." This meeting will take place in March 2009 and will deal directly with development issues. The UN Secretary General Assembly President,

Father Miguel D'Escoto, said, "the March meeting would be a great opportunity for the heads of state to set up a new Bretton

Woods institution and reconsider the mechanism of the current international financial institutions. He went on to say, "The current crisis is a man made one. We have betrayed the core of our ethical values under the influence of the dominating values of individualism and selfishness. The problem is that the idea of justice now has nothing to do with our economic activities. To save ourselves we have to move from selfishness to human-centered development. The Doha Consensus sets the basis for an inclusive, democratic and transparent process to rebuild trust of all nations in the international financial, monetary and trade institutions. Only with the participation by all nations can we ensure that these policies truly benefit all peoples, especially the most vulnerable and poorest among us."

Other agreed upon outcomes include:

- The Monterrey Consensus was overwhelmingly affirmed'
- That commitments of aid development should not be affected by the current global financial crisis.;
- The Doha Trade Negotiations will be reactivated; and
- Mechanisms for following up on commitments made by developed countries will be developed.

The fact that the Governments attending the meeting in Doha agreed that the United Nations should be the place where international monetary and financial policies are discussed and decided is a major step forward.

