



211 East, 43r St., Suite 706 New York, NY 10017

Tel: 646-487-0003

Fax: 646-487-0004

E-mail: viny@vivatinternational.org □ vivatssps-roma@pcn.net □ vivatvd-roma@pcn.net

carmen@vivatinternational.org □ larry@vivatinternational.org

Website: www.vivatinternational.org

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TOLERANCE and DIVERSITY - A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

WCAR Visionary Declaration

What we envisage for every man, woman and child is a life where exercise of individual gifts and personal rights is affirmed by the dynamic solidarity of our membership of the one human family.

Mary Robinson and Nelson Mandela

The World Conference Against Racism (WCAR), which met August 31 to September 8, 2001, adopted the theme **EQUALITY, JUSTICE AND DIGNITY**. Durban, South Africa was host to 2300 government representatives from 163 countries, including 16 heads of State, 58 foreign ministers and 44 ministers; nearly 4000 representatives of NGOs and over 1100 media representatives. WCAR adopted a wide range of measures to combat racism and called for action by the international community to eradicate it wherever it may be found.

WCAR-NGO Forum was held prior to and overlapping the Conference. The great importance put on the 2001 WCAR was shown through the organized preparatory work planned and executed prior to Durban, with regional expert seminars and regional preparatory meetings held around the world.

The common issues of focus raised in the preparatory meetings were: gender, migration, trafficking in persons, indigenous peoples, multi-ethnic states, and the protection of minority rights. NGOs, moreover had included a multiple array of issues such as slavery and the slave trade, colonialism, abolition of caste system, migrants and refugees, nationality and citizenship rights, criminal justice, compensation and reparations, rights of indigenous peoples, discriminatory globalization, and the right of sexual orientation, to mention only a few.

Youth Summit

The Youth Summit, a two-day summit (26-27 August) comprised of NGO youth representatives and youth delegates of government delegations, was organized by WCAR Youth Secretariat and the Youth Task

Team, both of South Africa, together with the International Youth Committee. About 200 young adults, representing all major world geographical regions, gathered to discuss issues of particular concern to them.

WCAR Declaration at its conclusion

Though the full text of the document of the WCAR is not yet available here are some of the important issues on which agreement was reached:

- The Conference called for an end to the violence and the swift resumption of peace negotiations in the Middle East.
- Expressing concern about the plight of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation, the Conference recognized the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state.
- On the question of slavery, the Conference acknowledges and profoundly regrets the massive human sufferings and the tragic plight of millions of men, women and children as a result of past slavery, slave trade, apartheid, colonialism and genocide. The Conference noted that

some States have taken the initiative of expressing remorse or presenting apologies. It called on all who have not yet done so to find appropriate ways to restore the dignity of the victims.

- The Conference recognizes the need to develop programs based on the spirit of solidarity and mutual respect in the following areas: debt relief, poverty eradication, building or strengthening

democratic institutions, promotion of foreign direct investment and market access.

- The Conference, recognizing the efforts of African Leaders to address the challenges of poverty, calls on developed countries, as well as the UN system, to support the New African Initiative and other innovative mechanisms such as the World Solidarity Fund for the Eradication of Poverty.

CHALLENGES OF THE 2001 WCAR TO VIVAT INTERNATIONAL

We see the primary challenges as being to:

- Strengthen our commitment to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) by evaluating our strategies and programs of action in the light of the recent WCAR, with a focus on the centrality of human rights.
- Support all possible initiatives that have been started regarding ministries among migrants and migrant workers, trafficking in women and children, indigenous peoples, minority groups, caste groups, people living with HIV/AIDS, refugees, gender mainstreaming and all forms of ministries that deal with debt relief, poverty eradication and environmental rights.

**The Human Rights Fax
Hotline is 41-22-917-0092.**

This is a 24-hour facsimile line that allows the UN Center for Human Rights in Geneva to monitor and react rapidly to human emergencies. The hotline is available to victims of human rights violations, their relatives and NGOs.

- Take stronger initiatives towards the development of a culture of peace to promote human rights education and the promotion of conflict resolution and reconciliation. We urge school administrators to include these topics in their curricula. We believe that educating the upcoming generations will make a difference in shaping future society. We address all community and pastoral ministers to look into human rights violations present in the local, national and international realities and to apply

the principles and approaches of “intersectionality” in planning strategies and actions.

- Be well informed about the Universal Declaration of Rights, which is the “bible” of human rights advocates, and other UN treaties. Lobby for the signing and ratification of the core human rights UN treaties in their national governments.

We endorse the Declaration of the Religious NGOs in Durban, initiated by the Franciscans International, signed by about 15 NGOs, including VIVAT International. It focuses on the importance of creating mechanisms by which

reconciliation and restoration can be accomplished, such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (full text in: www.vivatinternational.org)

Living in a world confronted by terrorism, we join all peaceful and non-violent groups and network with them in a sustained manner towards the eradication of all forms of institutionalized and globalized terrorism.

VIVAT-NY would appreciate your reports from its members about their initiatives, strategies and programs of action regarding the above.

You may direct your reports to Sr. Carmen.

Financing for Development Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) Meeting (October 15-19)

NGOs pursued the issue of **debt** in the PrepCom. They argued that the HIPC Initiative (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative) implemented by the World Bank and the IMF is dead. In its place they are calling for a new independent and transparent process under the guidance of the UN that would give poor countries the authority to declare an emergency standstill on debt repayments when these become unsustainable. Debt sustainability would be determined by an independent, publicly accountable process.

Another important issue pushed by the NGOs is innovative resources for financing, including the currency transaction tax (CTT). The concept is generally accepted today, but the NGOs and Government delegates are debating its implementation. There is a strong proposal to collect it at the national level. However, the discussion is moving more towards utilizing certain amounts of money for Global Public Goods. NGOs will have to keep up the pressure to see that most of this money is first utilized for poverty eradication in poor countries. The Women's Caucus advocated that poverty reduction and gender equality be treated as Global Public Goods.

Contributions by VI to the PrepCom

- VI is signatory to two statements, *Without Debt Cancellation there is no Development* and *Present Policies Perpetuate*

Poverty, submitted to the PrepCom by the Sub-Committee on Eradication of Poverty of the NGO Committee on Social Development. Lawrence is secretary of the sub-committee.

- VIVAT International was joint signatory to a statement from the NGO Debt Caucus to the members of the PrepCom. Lawrence took an active leadership role in drafting the statement.
- A joint statement, *The Global Economy Must Work for All of Us or Ultimately it will Work for No One*, was submitted to the FfD PrepCom by VIVAT International and Franciscans International.
- A joint statement, *Innovative resources for development* was submitted to the FfD PrepCom by CIDSE, Caritas Internationalis, Franciscans International, VIVAT International and Pax Romana
- *NGO Benchmarks on Financing for Development*, was jointly signed by VIVAT International with CIDSE, Center of Concern, Caritas Internationalis, International Association (Sisters of Mercy) and Social Alert.

(The above papers and a detailed report can be found in the section 'Financing for Development' on the VI homepage: www.vivatinternational.org)

An Appeal to VIVAT International Members to Contribute to the FfD Process:

As is clear from this brief report, VIVAT International is participating in the FfD process in a very significant way. We believe that finance is an important element for development, especially for the very poor.

However, we could be even more effective, if you also contribute to this process by studying the FfD process going on in your own country, by participating in the national/regional meetings connected with this process, and reporting back to Lawrence Correa (larry@vivatinternational.org).

He could then represent your experiences and views in the future FfD process leading to the World Conference on Financing for Development in March, 2002.

NEWSBITS FROM VIVAT INTERNATIONAL, NEW YORK

28 Aug – 8 Sept : Sr. Carmen participated in the WCAR NGO Forum and the WCAR in Durban, South Africa. She also met Fr. Gabriel Afagbegee, SVD, Director of the Lumko Institute, who shared the news of launching a research project on HIV/AIDS.

19 – 21 Sept: The VIVAT Board of Directors invited Sr. Carmen to participate in a special meeting with the Board on Sept 21. The main point of discussion was the relation of JPIC to VIVAT-NY. It was the first opportunity for VI-NY to be present in the VI Board Meeting. It was very life-giving.

24 – 29 Sept: Sr. Carmen was invited to attend the combined SVD/SSpS meeting of the European Zone JPIC Coordinators in Dueñas, Spain.

The meeting included input on globalization and genetic engineering. The final statement expressed the rootedness of JPIC in our Trinitarian spirituality, encouraged an understanding of eco-feminine spirituality, and acknowledged both positive and negative consequences of globalization.

Congratulations to all involved for the organization, the generosity and gracious hospitality accorded to the participants. This invitation initiated a beneficial means for JPIC and VI-NY to dialogue and collaborate.

15 Oct marked an important milestone for VIVAT International.

VIVAT International has been granted accreditation to participate in all the PrepCom Meetings and in the World Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. This is an important step for VI in preparation for the forthcoming application for accreditation to UN-ECOSOC in 2003.

Upcoming UN World Conferences:

March 2002: UN World Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Monterrey, Mexico. The event will consider national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development.

8 – 12 April 2002: Second World Assembly on Aging to be held in Madrid, Spain. The theme: "Building a Society for All Ages."

Fall 2002: The Second UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) will review progress made since the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, on issues such as climate change and energy issues. South Africa will again host the UN Conference, this time in Johannesburg.

Acknowledgements

VIVAT International NY acknowledges the many signs of concern that we have received after the tragic September 11 terrorists' attacks on the Twin Towers of the WTC.

We also acknowledge the members who have communicated with us between August 15 and Oct 22: SSpS USA Province, SSpS Argentina North, Avin Kunnekkadan Avinash, SVD from Dharma Bharati National Institute (India), Bro. Fabien Fula, SVD from St. Peter Parish, Kikwit, Congo, Philippines SSpS Southern Province, SSpS Atambua, Timor, Indonesia.

We appreciate the Provinces who have started a VIVAT International-JPIC Corner in their Newsletters.

Other news: Anthony Ranada, SVD, Central Province, Philippines, participated in the International Conference on Human Rights and Prison Reform, Oct 6-15 in NY* SSpS JPIC Chile.

Christmas 2001 +++

VIVAT International New York wishes all a PEACE that embraces all humanity, that heals all brokenness and that reconciles all nations.

Blessings+++for the New Year 2002.