



# Embrace the World

A journal of Congregational justice issues prepared by:  
the International Office for Justice, Peace and Solidarity in Mission  
and the Good Shepherd NGO Office

June 2006 # 19

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## At The NGO Office:

### Good Shepherd at CEDAW:

The Convention to Eliminate all forms  
of Discrimination Against Women

#### *A voice against Trafficking in Australia:*

In a collaborative effort with other NGOs, Good Shepherd presented an NGO shadow report to the 34<sup>th</sup> session of CEDAW in January 2006. Over 40 religious congregations and NGOs supported the 35-page report, which focused its content on the issue of trafficking, relevant to article 6 of CEDAW.

The GS Social Justice office, led by Tania de Jong and Christine Carolan, has been active in the effort to link direct service and systemic issues. They decided to initiate a response after the invitation from the GS NGO office in New York. The report was presented in New York by Melbourne barrister Georgie Costello and Sydney lawyer Jennifer Byrne, both experienced in trafficking through immigration expertise. Georgie and Jennifer responded to questions from the CEDAW panel and arranged informal meeting times to speak with the CEDAW experts, ensuring that the experts knew the issues from the NGO viewpoint.

The report examines the treatment, policies and legislative issues facing women who have been held in sexual slavery, including detention and repatriation policies of the Federal Police and the Department of

Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. The NGOs make clear recommendations for government policy.

#### *A voice for Women in Malaysia:*

Good Shepherd Malaysia is considering how they can best put forth their voice for women at the 35<sup>th</sup> session of CEDAW in May 2006, when their government report is due.

Upon invitation from the NGO office Malaysia identified a GS representative, an expert in International Human Rights Law.

And now they are considering how to best interact with the process. They will evaluate the dates and the resources needed to present in New York.

One way they may proceed is to collaborate with the National Council for Women's Organisations who have already been preparing a shadow report for some time; it covers most of the issues. Still, GS would like to speak on some issues of Muslim law that disadvantage women.

When GS Malaysia heard about the CEDAW report from the NGO office the immediate response was "We are indeed excited at the opportunity... we REALLY, REALLY want to raise our voices on behalf of women in Malaysia... It is a learning process for us."

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**Good Shepherd at CSW -**  
UN Commission the Status of Women

***GS Canada presents Language and Media:***

The MAISEY (Media Awareness Initiative about Sexually Exploited Youth) project of Marymount in Winnipeg, Canada presented a workshop on language and media. The workshop examined:

- ❖ Language in the media and its influence on society's perceptions;
- ❖ Organizations' ability to influence appropriate media coverage about sexual exploitation of children and youth;
- ❖ Suggestions for getting your message right to media.



The presenter was GS staff Deborah Zanke, Chair of MAISEY.

Local MAISEY actions have resulted in changes in the way media depict sexually exploited youth in Canada.

***GS Ethiopia presents Clean Cook Stoves:***

Former GS Volunteer Cheryl O'Brien, with husband Jim, both staff of Project Gaia, presented the "Impact of Cooking Fuels and Stoves on Women in 'Developing' Nations"



After an overview of the projects and a stove demonstration, Project Gaia presented a specific model of women's participation in Addis Ababa, highlighting the women leaders of the Gaia Association and the Good Shepherd Sisters' women's cooperative.

***Handcrafting Justice has Artisan Sale:***



Now it is a Tradition! GS Handcrafting Justice is one of the top vendors at the UN CSW Artisan Fair, a venue where international women come to sell goods in order to support economic justice. GS presence is a visible symbol of GS work inside the Commission as we advocate for women's and girls' rights, economic justice, gender equality, and an end to Violence Against Women.

***GS collaborates on Trafficking workshops:***

Three international panel presentations were co-sponsored by GS on issues of trafficking, prostitution and pornography. There are wide variations of attitudes on



these issues and our goal is to educate the NGO community so that we have the unity to urge correct policies, based on human rights and God-given dignity.

***GS NGO intern, Vandana Lobo, works on the Girls Caucus of the UN CSW:***



Vandana Lobo, intern from India/Nepal, spoke on a panel on promotion of girls' leadership. She also made strong connections with the government delegates of India.

*“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.”*

*Earth Charter, 2000*

## **Earth – Our Home**

*A reflection on Earthcare and Reconciliation by  
Shalini Podimattam*

In the beginning, when God completed the work of creation, ‘God saw that everything was very good’. Humans were placed at the breast of Mother Earth who nourished them. She embraced her humans with the warmth of sun, purity of air, and freshness of water. She provided for them from her abundant and natural resources. Humans were entrusted with the responsibility of enhancing the vitality and beauty of nature.

Humans, as they developed, broke away from this relationship of respect and nurturing. We mined deep into the heart of Mother Earth for minerals and wealth, poisoned the earth with chemicals and fertilizers, stripped the forest bare, swept the ocean clear, all for fast results and excess profits. We dumped nuclear and non-biodegradable wastes of our development into the ocean bed polluting water and destroying life. We invaded, plundered and killed our sisters and brothers to accumulate wealth. If justice is right relationship, we behaved unjustly.

Nature reacts violently as we have seen in the Asian Tsunami, the earthquake of southeast Asia, the floods of Guatemala, the hurricanes Katrina and Wilma (names previously designated only as women’s names!), heat-waves, prolonged droughts in Africa, torrential rains, and acid rain caused by air pollution. We speak about these complex depletions as global warming. The destruction of natural habitats of animals prompts virulent new diseases and pandemics such as the current avian flu.

The carriers of threatening diseases have been victims of pollution and environmental destruction caused by humans.

Experts say that the greatest threat to us and to future generations may come from conflict between humans and nature. Yes, “plucking a flower affects a distant star.”  
*Poet Frances Thompson*

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future... We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.” *Preamble of Earth Charter, 2000*

The General Chapter of 2003 calls us to “*Promote a culture of peace and nonviolence so that the rights of every person and of all creation be respected*”.

Our commitment to peace and non-violence calls us to:

- Promote a spirituality of inclusion;
- Promote values of relationship, respect, and nurturance for human, animal, and plant life;
- Preserve the integrity of ecosystems
- Replace individualism with cooperative relationship; consumerism with careful use of things; and throw-away habits with recycling of goods;
- Join action and study groups with the young for re-education and sustainable living;
- Affirm gender equality – support human rights, healthcare and economic opportunity for women;
- Influence governments for pro-poor and pro-earth policies and legislation.

How do we take an active part in restoring life and dignity for all, especially where it is most diminished? How can our spiritu-

ality, formation programs, and ministries contribute to this call? How does our charism impel our action?

*“Peace with God –  
Peace with all of Creation.”*

Let this message of Pope John Paul II on World Day of Peace 1990 be our prayer and action.

For more information on Earth Charter:  
<http://www.earthcharter.org/>

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## **Good Shepherd raising its voice against Trafficking:**

### **Petition against prostituting women at World Cup Games**

The NGO office invited Good Shepherd across the globe to take part in a petition against the prostitution of women at the World Cup Games in Germany this coming June. We have had responses from hundreds of GS persons who have participated in signing the petition and simultaneously are raising awareness of the violence done to women through the system of prostitution. The NGO office has done much work to name the prostitution of women as a form of violence against women and as a violation of women’s human rights.



*To see the CATW petition in several languages go to:*

<http://catwpetition.ouvaton.org/php/index.php>

## **Contributions to the International TIP report:**

*The NGO office invited GS to submit national information about the reality of trafficking to the USA Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. The report is admittedly political but still, many women in countries where no data exists have used the report to push for laws and policies by their governments. Grassroots contributions make the report increasingly more credible. Thanks to those who responded! Here are some brief notes from their reports.*

**Belgium:** GS Belgium noted the problematic issue of diplomatic immunity for governments’ embassy personal involved in trafficking. They brought forward the need for longer-term services for victims; it is unrealistic to expect healing and integration to be done quickly. They also remarked how religious communities, with government financial support, can be a safe resource for women. **Submitted by Lalini Gunawardena and Clare O’Mahoney**

**Ethiopia:** Labor migration is one the chief ways that women and children get caught in the trap of traffickers - laws are in place but there is a lack of personal, social, and political will to bring wrongdoers to justice. Likewise, training on issues of HIV/AIDS is lacking. **Submitted by Sr. Saba Tensaew, RGS**

**Sri Lanka:** Trafficking in Sri Lanka is largely denied. Media in all its forms needs to be used to make the public aware that trafficking is a problem. Particular to Sri Lanka is the trafficking of children for use as soldiers by the terrorists’ movements. **Submitted by Immaculate de Alwis**

*The 05 TIP report can be found: (English only)*  
<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/>

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## Brief Notes–Around the World

### Linking Systems and Direct Services

#### From Canada, the Mission Integration Office:

Canada is asking all its affiliates, individually and corporately, to actively join the *Make Poverty History* campaign. National action ensures that governments fulfill the promise to end child poverty.

See: <http://www.whiteband.org/News/gcapnews.2005-12-08.1908511035/en>

#### From Good Shepherd Contemplative Sisters, Chile:

The first Tuesday of each month will be a special day of prayer and solidarity with the congregation and NGO issues of Justice. Already the Sisters share food with needy families and reflect on all justice documents sent to them.

#### From Sr. Annunziata, JP contact Italy:

The Italian province provides shelter and direct services to Nigerian women who have been trafficked. They support the women in the process of denunciation of traffickers to the police. Along with their direct service, they participate in vigils and marches and public prayer against the system of prostitution.

#### From the Report JPSM-Group, 2005, Germany:

We remind our Good Shepherd People of the special “**International Days.**” We prepared intercessions for women between 25 November and 10 December; all our communities and most of our friends have used them. We also belong to a group of women’s organisations that prepared for 8th March 2006, **the International Day of Women**; we demonstrated and voiced our

concern for women who are trafficked to Germany or forced into prostitution or marriage (frequently Moslems).

#### From JP Contact, Marta Iris, Central America:

In Chimaltenango we are concerned about the sexual exploitation in the bars... the women come from surrounding countries... there is an urgent necessity but we need the professional skills... we will find a way to be of presence...

#### From JP contact, Belgium:

In Belgium refugees are an urgent concern; everyday their lives deteriorate. Good Shepherd and the Justice teams seek active solidarity with immigrants who live on the unseen margins of society in extreme poverty. To do this, the sisters collaborate with many established organizations: day care centers, refugee services, Church outreach, and legal centers. Good Shepherd says: “our obligation is to be beside these people and to accompany them in their sufferings and find solutions for their problems.”

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## Keeping Indigenous Peoples in View

*The 5th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) will be held 15 to 26 May 2006 with the theme of redefining the Millennium Development Goal from the reality of indigenous p e o p l e .*

**Let us all listen to the voices of indigenous peoples, and act as their partners to protect indigenous rights, particularly those of indigenous children. This will not only help to right historic wrongs and remove current injustices. It will truly enrich us all. With our help, the indigenous children of today can be leaders of tomorrow.**

— UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan  
from a speech delivered in November 2003 in  
Cuzco,  
Peru, a sacred site for many indigenous peoples.

## Religious NGOs attend the World Social Forum

The World Social Forum (WSF) is a popular movement of grassroots social activists scheduled to coincide with the World Economic Forum of the elite. Conceived in Porto Allegro Brasil, held once in Mumbai India, it is now a regional Forum whose goals remain to generate the democratic energy to create just and peaceful alternatives to the dominant economic order that excludes so many of our brothers and sisters from natural resources and material wealth of the world.

A number of New York religious NGOs reported back from their experience in Caracas, Venezuela, January 2006. Those of us who work within the UN system on issues of social and economic justice find it helpful to keep the experiences of the WSF close to our work. Inside the UN, the grassroots can seem so far away. Our systemic work must always be linked with our direct services and the cries of those who live in poverty and social domination.

Four themes emerged from the WSF in Caracas and were defined at the Social Movements Assembly on January 29, 06. They are consistent with our mission of justice and reconciliation:

- ❖ Mobilize against the occupation of Iraq and against all militarization;
- ❖ Resist the WTO and a conclusion of the Doha Round;
- ❖ Protest the exclusiveness of the G-8 Summit, July 2006, Saint Petersburg, Russia;
- ❖ Speak against the policies of the World Bank and IMF, especially the coming Summit, September 2006

What ways can you participate in these ongoing actions in your local setting?

## Attention to Migration

Recognizing that international migration is a phenomenon linked to globalization, the governments of the UN will hold special high-level hearings on the topic of migration in September 2006. Good Shepherd is now working as part of an Ad Hoc group of NGOs seeking it ensure that governments give attention to factors of Social Needs, Human Rights, and Trafficking in Persons. We will promote a grassroots, experiential perspective, derived from our links to direct ministries, that include attention to issues of fear, exploitation, and racism, all of which stimulate attitudes and behaviors of host societies.

The UN has designated migrants as a vulnerable group, meaning that migrants are disadvantaged in relation to the host society. Their situation may be described as legal and social inequality that makes an exclusionary distinction between nationals and aliens.

How do your ministries offer services to migrants and advocate for national policies of justice for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers? Let the JPSM and NGO offices know - we'd like to stay linked.

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News notes prepared by  
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See this newsletter on the website at:  
<http://www.buonpastoreint.org/index.htm>

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you.

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