Regional Action –
Latin America-Caribbean
Making use of NGO Status:

In order to implement the GS direction to make maximum use of our NGO status, GSs in Latin America-Caribbean decided to participate in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC in English o CEPAL in Spanish). The theme of the Tenth Conference was on Women and the Economy. A richness of four GS persons attended: Srs M. Augusta Arellano, provincial of Ecuador; Graciela Méndez Perera, secretary for regional Justice team; M. Eugenia Torrico, Bolivia; and Narcisa Vivanco, JP Contact in Ecuador.

After the days of meeting – it was the first GS presence at an ECLAC conference - the GS people prepared a full report that gives an overview of conference issues. Perhaps more importantly, it specifies a number of implications for GS as we live out our congregational directions with fidelity.

The group noted the following challenges to GS as we participate in new systems:
-We must debate issues and themes among ourselves and be conversant in them;
-We are challenged to revise and/or to re-define formation programs for leadership that include the young, the indigenous and Afro descent women. If we do not have such programs we can create them or collaborate with others;
-We are challenged to know national statistics and information about women so that we can advocate on the political level.

Among conclusions pertinent to the congregation were:
-The congregation orientation to change unjust structures and work in systems is very relevant.
-Effective programs evaluate the prioritization of a clear commitment to human rights for women and support the participation of women.
-The integration of our mission, systems approach and direct service requires effective use of political instruments on behalf of women.
-It is important to stay in public spaces on behalf of women.
-We can participate when we learn the documents and the language of NGOs and regional movements.
-Staying updated with women’s debates and dialogues is very important.
-GS can organize better regional representation for delegations to pertinent conferences.
-Country reports and social events can be important to the lives of the women whose lives cry out for our presence and work.

For a full report of the conference, request it from Graciela Méndez Perera, Secretaría Regional de Justicia gramenpebp@yahoo.com.ar

Or go to this website:  http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/mujer/noticias/noticias/7/26657/P26657.xml&xsl=/mujer/tpl/p1f.xsl&base=/mujer/tpl/top-bottom.xsl

Regional JP Action in Africa
From notes by Catherine Mutinndi, JP contact Kenya

The GS JP team in Kenya was able to participate in The 1st International Conference on Child Sexual Abuse in Africa this past September, since it was held in Nairobi.

The conference gave an international picture of child sexual abuse, particularly as it affects the girl child. Over 400 participants shared concerns. Good Shepherd gained by being able to:

- Identify the causes, nature and scale of the issue;
- Advance knowledge about various types of sexual abuse and their complexity (child prostitution, trafficking, female genital mutilation, defilement, coercion, child marriage, gender non-conforming children, and physically challenged children...)
- Identify strategies to protect children against sexual abuse.
- Share experiences in order to enhance partnerships and networking.

Such a conference opened larger avenues for integration of our commitment to justice. Academic and experiential expertise was drawn from across the globe, which made the presentations uniquely enriching. Case examples and statistics were disheartening because the problem is so huge. Even countries with adequate laws do not protect their children well. To obtain a summary of deliberations, contact Sr Catherine at kitindi@yahoo.com.

Justice and Climate Change - NGO leadership
By Joan Spiering, GS USA

“The impact of Climate change is grave and growing. We cannot continue business as usual... we must all search for solutions....” Thus did UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon frame the serious issue that brought together 1,800 international participants for the annual NGO conference at the UN in New York. We are familiar with the warnings. It was impressive to see the NGO world take up the challenge and make the connections to Human Rights, gender equality, migration, and extreme poverty – all issues relevant to GS mission and ministries. Governments have shown very little practical leadership on the issues; as often happens, the NGOs took up the issue themselves challenging our own practices as well as pushing governmental policies.

Two Good Shepherd sisters and two GS Volunteers participated in the conference. We were confronted not so much with theories, but with the dire need to bring about changes in lifestyle and consumer patterns. This is a particular challenge to those of us from the “developed countries” as speaker after speaker told us that the most vulnerable countries, the most vulnerable peoples, who have contributed least to global warming, are at greatest risk of water
exhaustion, soil depletion, loss of home, loss of sustainable environment. Are these not the very people within the heart of Good Shepherd? How, then, can I/we act for the common good?

For more information, go to: http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/annual-conf.asp

I especially recommend the papers by Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri of the IPCC, Tariq Banuri of Pakistan, and Marcos Terena of Brazil when they are posted.

Milestone for Indigenous Peoples Worldwide

Marking an historic moment for more than 370 million indigenous peoples, the UN General Assembly adopted, September 13 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This achievement is the result of more than two decades of sometimes painful and conflict-ridden consultation and dialogue among governments and indigenous peoples from all regions. It is a big step in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all peoples.

The Declaration promotes full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in all that concern them. It emphasizes the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue development according to their own needs and aspirations. It establishes a standard for eliminating human rights violations, discrimination and marginalization. It addresses individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, and language, among others.


Good Shepherd at Counter-Trafficking Seminar in Rome:

A first international conference on human trafficking in Rome, sponsored by the US Embassy to the Holy See and the Italian Union of Major Superiors (USMI), gathered Catholic sisters from 26 countries and all continents in October 2007. Five Good Shepherd Sisters were among the 33 delegates. The group is now working to form an international network of religious against trafficking in persons. Delegates committed themselves to use their personnel, resources and traditions of service to those living in situations of poverty to eradicate human trafficking. Thanks to Srs Magdalena (France), Marcela (Mexico), Marley (Colombia), Deborah (Canada), and Supaporn (Thailand) for representing Good Shepherd. Contact the person in your region for further reports.

Events and Resources:

For awareness and local involvement

Sexual Exploitation:

3rd World Congress Against Commercial Child Sexual Exploitation, Brazil, late in 2008: For information: http://www.ecpat.net/World_Congress/index.html (links to all languages)

Economic Gender Justice:

Finance for Development UN conference will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29 November to 2 December 2008. http://www.un.org/esa/fdd/ [English only]

Sustain justice and make full use of our NGO status...

As a new GS IJP office is coming into existence, it may be helpful to review the structures of the congregational JP work. Please share this overview to help all GS people understand the commitment to JP that has grown over the years since the GS 1973 Justice statement.

Good Shepherd Int. Justice Peace Office, located in New York:

JP Contact Network: The new office serves to coordinate the entire network of JP Contact persons as well as the regional JP teams. This network was strengthened over the past year through a series of regional JP workshops, organized and implemented by Shalini Podimattam. Participation included local JP Contacts as well as additional JP support persons. Each region also had participation from some local leadership and members of the CLT. Each unit and region set goals with activities to reach their goals. The dynamic of this work will be continued and supported by the new office.

NGO representation in New York: The JP team will continue to amplify the voice of GS at the structure of the ECOSOC of the UN. In NY the NGO representative serves on many NGO committees related to women’s rights, girls rights and economic justice. Among the major commissions GS participates in Social Development, Status of Women, Forum on Indigenous Issues and the ongoing hearings on issues such as economic justice or migration in various processes of ECOSOC.

The JP coordinator and the NGO rep seek to coordinate the work in relation to the apostolate and priorities of the units and regions of GS.

NGO representation in Geneva. In the past year, Sr. Hedwig quietly moved in to Geneva to serve as NGO rep for the congregation within the structures of UN Geneva. She will also serve as the EU regional representative for the UN Economic Commission.

UN Geneva houses the Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and most recently, CEDAW, The Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Each of these bodies hold opportunities for NGOs to present reports in favor of women and children. Each report must be initiated at the national level. If GS in your country is active in reports to CEDAW, the Human Rights Council or Child Rights, please contact Sr. Hedwig and she can help coordinate your report going properly through the system.

Regional NGO representation at UN Economic Commissions:

In the past years, GS leadership has appointed a part-time NGO rep for each UN regional Economic Commission. They are in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, and Santiago.

Each of these Commissions functions somewhat differently and covers a very broad agenda. Within each Commission there are agenda items on gender justice, women’s empowerment, etc. As each local rep finds opportunities where GS could learn, participate or contribute on issues related to our mission, they will inform the JP Contacts in the region and encourage GS to become stronger in our regional presence to systems and structures.

Explore your UN website to learn more about UN structures; it is your ongoing formation!

http://www.un.org
Some ways GS celebrated Int. Day of Peace:

In Cairo Egypt, all students, employees, and sisters commemorated one minute of silence. A mass and holy hour were held and along with sharing between students and adults, each sought some personal act such as asking forgiveness or reconciling some issue.

At the UN Headquarters in NY a special ceremony was held. The Secretary General (SG) rang the Peace Bell, molded from coins donated by people from sixty countries. The SG delivered a message asking people throughout the world to observe a minute of silence and reflect on the universal goal of peace.

In Kenya, the JP team marked Sept. 21st with a new sense of solidarity with each GS person and the entire world. Various ministries celebrated with events such as discussions on “WHY PEACE?” with the women and girls. Peace rituals connected prayer to reality, as in the example of praying in solidarity with those whose slum dwellings had burnt and later making a visit to the site of the loss.

In Mauritius, sisters and youth of Pelletier Home organized an evening of activities to which neighbors and youth of the district came. The youth put up Peace-Art work to prepare the space. A presentation on the UN was given and then smaller work-group discussions were held. Commitments to peace actions were made, a meal was shared and prayers were offered in the chapel.

For a full report of the activities, contact: Francoise Mestry: francmestry@yahoo.co.uk

Excerpt of a prayer composed by a youth: Jesus Lord, keep us in the mind of humility and holiness so that through us peace is spilled always into the world. _♥♥_

Around the World - GS Notes:

From GS People, SingaporeMalaysia: Good Shepherd People in Singapore Malaysia convened a special prayer session to be in solidarity with the people of Myanmar at this time of political unrest and uncertainty. Everyone wore red ribbons in support of the people’s cry for justice. Let us “cry out together – apostolic and contemplative, sisters and laity – that Justice reign universally.” (General Chapter Direction Statement 2003).

From Ethiopia, Sr. James Clines: Children of Good Shepherd program in Ethiopia submitted drawings on the theme “We Can End Poverty” to the United Nations. Over 12,000 drawings were submitted. Six child artists, age 6 to 15, were selected to show their art at a UN ceremony with Sect. Gen. BanKi-moon on Oct 17th.

From Indonesia, JP Contact Cecilia: GS Indonesia has joined a CEDAW Working Group Initiative. They are reviewing the “Concluding Comments” of the CEDAW Panel in response to the Government Report. The group found that the NGO shadow report had influenced the CEDAW panel quite positively. GS looks toward being part of a network using CEDAW as a tool to advocate for women in Indonesia.

From Singapore-Malaysia, unit leadership: In October, GS leader Susan Chia posed the challenge, “Show me where the poor are.” In collaboration with government officials and other mission partners, GS went to visit forgotten areas,
and listen to forgotten people. GS is now setting about work on a rural library, transportation, infrastructure repair, nutrition, and education in 6 villages.

**From the USA:**
In the USA, GS is a member of a regional alliance of Roman Catholic investors, the Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment. In recent actions they have had successes in ensuring that corporations such as Exxon Mobile or General Motors attend to the human and social costs of policies that result in global warming. Each small success builds toward stronger demands for corporate environmental justice.

**From Syria:** Sr. Claude Naddaf represented Good Shepherd on a Syrian women’s delegation to Turkey to discuss pro-women strategies between governments and NGOs. Among issues discussed were strategies for shelter and hot line services, issues of gender violence such as honor crimes, and suicide rates. Methodology discussed included collaboration between State and NGOs, integration of evaluative processes into policy, planning, and programming. The Syrian women will work with local NGOs and state entities to build national strategies and implement specific programs, such as training of police.

Meanwhile, GS direct service work in Syria continues to exhaust capacities as the influx of refugees from Iraq creates huge social strains.

**From the Sri Lankan Woman’s Desk:**
In relation to November 25, UN Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, GS Sr. Immaculate Alwis was invited by the parish priest to speak on the issue of Violence against Women at each parish mass. A first in this parish! She has also been asked to write a column for the Catholic weekly. Speaking for the voiceless!

---

**From GS Singapore, JP contact Gloria Bon:**
On Internationals Human Rights Day in Singapore, Dec 10 2007, GS people marched in a gathering organized by Buddhists. In Malaysia GS people participated in a march and walked under a white banner for religious freedom. GS organized other religious congregation and groups to join them in these activities.

---

**GS sisters visiting the European Parliament: linking direct services with systems and structures.**

**The final JP Contact workshop was held in Europe, December 02-07, Belgium**

---

Journal notes prepared by Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office
Winifred Doherty / Katherine Ward
Email: gsijpoffice@gssweb.org

See this publication on the website at:
[http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp](http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp)

Original in English
Please distribute to all communities, programs and Good Shepherd Friends in your province. Thank you.

*The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd is an NGO in special consultative status with ECOSOC, UN*