



CARME *ngo*

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"The globalization of solidarity through the prompt achievement of the MDGs established by the Millennium Declaration is a crucial moral obligation of the international community."

*Statement of the Holy See
63rd Session – United Nations
September 2008*



justfocus.org.nz

**Annual DPI/NGO Conference
Melbourne, Australia - 2010**

Focus on Advancing Global Health to Achieve MDGs

The 63rd Annual United Nations Department of Public Information Conference (DPI/NGO) was held in Melbourne, Australia, August 30–September 1, 2010. This is only the third time the conference has not been held at the UN headquarters in New York.

The theme of *Advance Global Health: Achieve the MDGs* emphasized the relationship between global health and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It highlighted the role of the NGOs and civil society in helping achieve the MDGs. Held a few weeks before many of the world's leaders descend upon New York for the opening of the UN General Assembly, the conference was pushing for greater progress on the MDGs.

Meeting the commitments on health, especially for women and children, is central to meeting all of the MDGs. Global health can not be separated from human rights since to be in good health is one of the human rights.

The conference highlighted effective ways in which civil society, in partnership with other actors, may contribute to fostering global health, not just managing disease.

Three roundtables were held during the 3 day conference: the role of the NGOs and civil society in helping achieve the MDGs; strengthening an integrated and systematic approach to achieving the health MDGs; and achieving the MDGs in our changing world.

Although the conference sessions emphasized the need for more integration on health programs, methods to generate outcome data, cost effective delivery, sustainability, and prevention, equity in global health, the discussions were more on the role of the NGOs and civil societies in helping achieve the MDGs.

The Carmelite NGO was represented at the conference by Carmelite priest Hariawan Adji from the Indonesian Province and the coordinator of the Asian Region for the Carmelite NGO.

Among the issues Hari took away from the conference were that many people are not well informed about global health nor that it and the MDGs are not just the commitments of the political leaders but of everyone. The language of public health and the



The 63rd Annual DPI/NGO Conference, held in Melbourne, Australia, with the theme of *Advance Global Health: Achieve the MDGs*, hosted 1,600 participants representing 350 NGOs from 70 countries. Some 650 participants were health specialists representing 200 NGOs.

MDGs is often too sophisticated for the people most in need of the information. In addition the level of education on these issues is quite low in many countries, stemming from a lack of commitment and responsibility on the part of nations.

What can we do as the Carmelite Family? Hari makes several suggestions. "We can cooperate with local grass-root NGOs in different areas of work and different locations. We need to continue to broaden the distribution and spiritual appeal of the Carmelite NGO Days of Prayer. We can also enlarge the vision and knowledge of our Carmelite sisters and brothers on global health and MDGs so that they become the agent of change. We need to support a reflection on our prophetic vocation throughout the Carmelite family and the faithful. We also need to educate people on these issues through our schools as well as seminars, workshops, and events where people may learn about the MDGs.

The declaration at the end of the conference outlined some of the significant health challenges targeted by the MDGs which have not been overcome:

- One billion people do not have access to adequate and appropriate food;
- 2.6 billion people around the world lack access to an improved sanitation facility;
- Eight out of 10 people who are without access to safe drinking water live in rural areas;
- Almost 9 million children die before the age of five; uncounted more have preventable disabilities;
- At least 340,000 women die each year of pregnancy-related diseases, as well as TB, malaria, and complications of AIDS;
- An estimated 420 million people in developing countries have a disability; 267 million worldwide have preventable visual impairment;
- Human induced environmental degradation causes short and long term health threats including climate change.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon has appointed an Advocacy Group to build political will and mobilize global action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The conference called upon all governments, agencies, corporations, and individuals to deliver on their human rights obligations to over a billion people living in poverty, by committing the finances and political will necessary to achieve the MDGs.

The closing declaration also highlighted the central role that individuals, families, and communities must play in fostering global health.

CarmeNGO is published four times each year and is distributed to those interested in the mission of the NGO. For more information or to add your name and address to our mailing list, please visit our website (carmelitengo.org) or write to us by email (jremson@carmelitengo.org) or by regular post at 1725 General Taylor Street; New Orleans, LA 70115; USA)

Links to Millennium Development Goals Sites:

63rd Annual DPI/NGO Conference: Advance Global Health – Advance the MDGs
<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconferenc>

We Can End Poverty: Millennium Campaign Website
<http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=mdg2010>

CoNGO: Conference of NGOs
<http://www.ngocongo.org>

United Nations Millennium Goals
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

The Carmelite NGO and the Millennium Goals
<http://carmelites.info/ngo/57-conference/millennium-goals.htm>

For your convenience, these and other resources are linked on our website: carmelitengo.org



Freedom of Religion or Belief at the United Nations

The fact is that people of the present day want to be able to freely profess their religion in private and in public. Indeed religious freedom has already been declared to be a civil right in most constitutions, and it is solemnly recognized in international documents.

The further fact is that forms of government still exist under which, even though freedom of religious worship receives constitutional recognition, the powers of government are engaged in the effort to deter citizens from the profession of religion and to make life very difficult and dangerous for religious communities.” (*Dignitatis Humanae*, #15, Paul VI, December 7, 1965)

The prophet Elijah is viewed as a religious figure with ties to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Carmelites share the Elijan tradition with Judaism and Islam. They find this heritage a springboard for dialogue with people of other religious traditions. A concentration on people’s experience of God allows Carmelites to seek closer bonds with all God seeking people. For this reason the Carmelite NGO has chosen “freedom of religion or belief” as an area of participation at the United Nations.

The promotion of religious freedom for all persons is grounded in our commitment to advance respect for human rights. The majority of the world’s people profess some religious belief. The right to believe or not to believe, without fear of government interference or restriction, provides an essential foundation for human dignity.

Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance Resolution was adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on March 6, 1996.

“**Discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity.**”

This resolution reaffirmed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief of 1981. The resolution

states that all States (Nations) have pledged themselves, under the Charter of the United Nations, to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. These rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person. The resolution emphasizes the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is far-reaching and profound and that it encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and the commitment to religion or belief, whether manifested individually or in community with others. It also emphasizes that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious bodies and groups at every level have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and the protection of freedom of religion or belief through education.

Discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his/her belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” In plain language it mean you have the right to profess your religion freely, to change it, and to practice it either on your own or with others.

“The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to one’s own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.

The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.” (*Dignitatis Humanae* #2).

by Jane Remson, O. Carm.
Main Representative



Religion and Environment

Finding it difficult to track where religions stand on the issue of environment? You are not alone. One web resource that might help is called "Religion and Environment." Not a fancy site by any means and updated often, it provides a series of links and brief explanations. It can be a good place to begin. You will only find a few links to Catholicism but it is rich in seeking out what positions other religions are taking and why.

daphne.palomar.edu/calenvironment/religion.htm



Finding Accurate Statistics

The UNESCO Trafficking Statistics Project is a first step toward clarifying what we know, what we think we know, and what we don’t know about trafficking. When it comes to statistics, this is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers get accepted, often with little inquiry into their derivations, lending to false precisions and spurious authority to many reports.

UNESCO is conducting a literature review and meta-analysis of existing statements on trafficking. UNESCO is tracing the origin of numbers cited by various sources, attempting to ascertain the methodology by which these numbers were calculated, and evaluating their validity. The aim is to clarify the bases on which estimates of the numbers of trafficked persons are derived, and to separate trafficking myths from trafficking realities.

www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=1022

New Look to Our Website

In order to better serve visitors to our website and to make information about the focus issues of our NGO more readily available, our website is undergoing a facelift.

With the selection of *Freedom of Religion or Faith* as a focus for the coming year, multiple resources will be on the Carmelite NGO website.

As we have noted before, the traffic to our site continues to increase. We hope to continue this trend by continuing to make the website a reliable source of information for all of our visitors.

carmelitengo.org



The Carmelite NGO Coordinating Team - l-r Arie Kuhl, Jane Remson, Joseph Chalmers, Helen Ojario, Annah Theresa Nyadombo, Míceál O'Neill, Hariawan Adji, William J. Harry.

**Gort Muire, Dublin
September 10-12, 2010**

Carmelite NGO Team Reviews Progress and Charts Course for 2011

The annual meeting of the Coordinating Team of the Carmelite NGO was held at the Gort Muire Retreat Center in Dublin, Ireland September 10–12, 2010. The group heard reports from each area of the NGO, including the regional reports, communications, the 63rd annual Department of Public Information Conference, the Spiritual Reflection Team, and the organization's administration including the New York

office. The full reports can be found on the Carmelite NGO website.

For the coming year, the theme of Freedom of Religion or Belief will be the focus of the Carmelite NGO.

During 2010, the Carmelite NGO participated at the World Summit on Climate Change held in Denmark, Copenhagen. As part of the religious response to the Summit, the Carmelite NGO promoted ringing church bells or other instruments at precisely 1500 hours around the world, giving attention to creation and climate change. The Carmelite NGO also participated in the Climate Justice Mass sponsored by Caritas International as well as the Ecumenical Celebration for Creation sponsored by the World Council of Churches. At the Ecumenical Celebration, a scripture reading was done by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and the sermon was given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams. The service was attended by Queen Margaret of Denmark and her family.

Materials collected at the Summit were distributed to Karit (the NGO of the Carmelites of the Iberian peninsula, and various Carmelite schools around the world.

On May 11, 2010, the Carmelite NGO also co-sponsored a "side event" at the United Nation's Review Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Entitled Consumption and the Rights of Mother Earth, the event was standing room only. Among the speakers was Carmelite Eduardo Scarel, a professor of Science and Atmospheric Studies at the University of Buenos Aires. He was joined by Pablo Solon, the Ambassador of Bolivia to the United Nations, David Krantz from Colombia University, and Dominican Patricia Siemen from Barry and St. Thomas Universities in Florida. Fr. Scarel's full presentation at the event is on the Carmelite NGO website.

As the Carmelite NGO continues to organize itself, the operating procedures to be followed had been reviewed by the General Council of the Order as well as the Governing Board of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel who is the sponsoring organization of the NGO. Minor changes had been made to the documents submitted to both groups following last year's meeting.

The team members were elected and the date of service was noted as September 12, 2010. Eduardo Agosto Scarel was added as the representative of the South American Region. An Executive Committee was elected with Jane Remson as president, Joseph Chalmers as vice president, Francis Xavier Hariawan Adji as secretary, Arie Kuil as treasurer, and William J. Harry and Helen Ojario as members-at large.

Reviewing actions taken on decisions made at last year's meeting, the group found widespread efforts to familiarize individuals and organizations with the work of the Carmelite NGO. Five hundred copies of a new booklet on the NGO have been distributed. The two "Day of Prayer" have been particularly well received with requests for the booklets coming in from all over the world and considerable feedback from those observing the days.

In Africa, North America, and Asia, renewed efforts will be made to educate the youth. The African region will also be networking with other organizations on climate change, trafficking, and freedom of religion and belief. The Asian region will begin translating the publications into Indonesian.

The Spirituality Reflection Team is in the process of developing position papers on the Carmelite NGO's focus areas. These will be reacted to by the theologians in their particular area of study.

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