



# carmelngo

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Catholic inspired Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) "continue to bring their contribution on a national, regional and international level to issues of major importance on behalf of the integral good of the human person and of all humanity."

*Forum of Catholic Inspired NGOs*



**NGO/DPI Annual Congress Hosted in Bonn, Germany**

## Responsible Citizens Building Sustainable Societies

The sixty-fourth annual Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organization (DPI/NGO) Conference, which focused on the role of civil society in creating and maintaining sustainable communities and developing responsive citizens, closed its three-day session with a call to action, encouraging participants to continue the dialogue they had begun in Bonn and to add action to all the talk.

Over three days, some 1,300 participants from 65 countries, all members of civil society organizations took part in four round table discussions, and more than 30 workshops and side events. They shared their experiences "on the ground" and presenting ideas on how to advance sustainable development around the world. The discussions during the conference covered a wide range of topics, including the role that volunteerism could play in building sustainable communities; the role of education in fostering change and training a new generation of activists; and the importance of changing consumer behavior.

The workshops presented participants with an opportunity for in-depth and provocative discussions, and participants used them to raise important questions about governance and corporate accountability, viewing sustainable development not only as an environmental issue but also as an economic and social justice issue. They also examined the issue of changing public perceptions of what was important in society and recasting the public discourse on the environment so that environmental concerns were not seen as being in opposition to economic growth.

As part of the opening session, participants listened to a number of speakers from the United Nations as well as from non-governmental organizations. They also viewed a video montage which showcased individuals and organizations, highlighting their work and the importance of volunteerism and civil society in supporting communities around the world.

The issues before the Conference, sustainable development and civic engagement, were real

and urgent. While the famine across the Horn of Africa dominates the news, today's challenges — food, energy, finance, water, climate — were “many, and complex.” The Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has presented a “50-50-50 Challenge.” By the year 2050, the world's population would reach more than 9 billion, 50 per cent more people than at the start of the present century. By the same year, 2050, the world must cut global greenhouse gases emissions by 50 per cent from 2000 levels.

“We are exhausting the capacity of our planet to guarantee our sustainable future,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a video message during the opening session of the conference. “The solution lies in a fundamental transformation of our consumption patterns and lifestyles,” he added. The Secretary-General also noted the large number of representatives from non-governmental organizations and thanked them for their participation.

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Kiyo Akasaka, in his closing remarks, said the real work on sustainability and volunteerism was just beginning. “There is much to be done and not a moment to lose,” he said. Mr. Akasaka also expressed hope that participants would leave Bonn inspired by a deep commitment to do their part to advance sustainable development through individual and collective volunteer efforts.

A common theme among most of the speakers was that advancement towards sustainable societies requires civil society encouraging people to realize that their local concerns were also global concerns. They suggested that by “connecting the dots” between different layers of society, volunteers and activists could have a greater impact on global problems.

Conference participants were urged not to grow discouraged in the face of so many seemingly intractable problems. Their individual actions combined will make a big difference in the world.

The role of the green economy was discussed not only in terms of environmental stewardship but also as a means of ending poverty and advancing social justice. It can be shown that the green economy was creating jobs, that it generated billions of dollars in revenues and that it was absolutely relevant to developing countries. One speaker cited the example of Kenya, where geothermal power was a huge, barely tapped source of renewable energy. The green economy was also relevant in terms of development because it could create jobs and improve economies in other ways. One of the keys was to get everyone involved, including children, schools, community members, local authorities and businesses, pointing out that when towns participated in fair trade campaigns there were benefits for everyone in terms of increased social capital, growth in enterprise zones, and consciousness-raising.

The Conference had provided stimulating ideas and a wealth of information as well as opportunities to discuss a wide range of topics. A hallmark of the conference was the active participation of many young people.

### **Towards Rio+20**

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, next June, is an opportunity, for young and older generations alike, to chart a course towards a more sustainable future. It will be an opportunity to put sustainable devel-

*continued on page 4*

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### **Useful Web Links Related to the Bonn Conference:**

**Website of the 2011 DPI/NGO Conference in Bonn, Germany**  
[www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference/](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ngoconference/)

**List of Exhibits at the Bonn Conference**  
[www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/ngoconference/shared/Documents/Final%20Exhibits.pdf](http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/ngoconference/shared/Documents/Final%20Exhibits.pdf)

**United Nations Volunteer Program**  
<http://www.unv.org/en/about-us.html>

**International Federation for Home Economics**  
<http://www.ifhe.org/197.html>

**United Nations Webcasts - 2011 DPI/NGO Conference**  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/08/press-conference-64th-annual-un-dpingo-conference.html>

*For your convenience, these and other resources are linked on our website: [carmelitengo.org](http://carmelitengo.org)*



**Carmelite NGO Coordinating Team** (L-R) Helen Ojario, Joseph Chalmers, William J. Harry, Hariawan Adji, Miceál O'Neill, Annah Theresa Nyadombo, Arie Kuil, Jane Remson, Eduardo Scarel.

## Carmelites Meet to Chart NGO Course for 2012

*“In a world facing an ecological catastrophe, we respond by helping one another in rediscovering that all human desire is a manifestation of the profound desire for God.” This is the vision set forth at the annual meeting of the Carmelite NGO. The vision enlivens our charism and directs us as we continue our involvement in: education, human rights, freedom of belief and sustainable development at the United Nations.*

The Carmelite NGO unites our involvement in global issues by providing the opportunity to participate in the process of understanding and enhancing the world in which we live. We will continue our efforts to educate on human rights especially the right to food for all people, expose human trafficking, support freedom of belief and sustainable development’s environmental programs in institutions of learning where Carmelites are members of the faculty and/or staff as well as in all areas where Carmelites serve.

Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, California stated, “The protection of the environment is vital as it is the envelope in which all life is contained.” His statement reflects well our vision of rediscovering that all human desire is a manifestation of the profound desire for God. According to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, “We are exhausting the capacity of our planet to guarantee our sustainable future. The solution lies in a fundamental transformation of our consumption patterns and lifestyles.”

Education, human rights, freedom of belief and sustainable development are important issues and they will continue receiving our attention; however, because of the urgency and attention currently directed towards climate change, caring for the environment (sustainable development) will be our major focus for 2012. To this end we have produced a document, “A Spiritual Pathway To A Sustainable Environment: The Position of the Carmelite NGO on Climate Change.” In addition we will continue the Day of Prayer on June 5<sup>th</sup>, World Environment Day, and we will send representatives to “Rio + 20: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development” (uncsd2012.org) in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

Today nearly one billion people suffer from food insecurity. The two themes for “Rio + 20” are: 1) green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and 2) institutional framework for sustainable development. These themes are relevant in addressing the need for sustainable food security for all the world’s people. As Pope John Paul II said, “Responsibility for the environment extends not only to present needs but also to those of the future.” The future depends upon what we do today.

*by Jane Remson, O. Carm. - Main Representative*



## Topography of Faith in USA

The Pew survey sorts the religious affiliations for US adults into major groupings-- Christians, other religions including Jewish and Muslim; and "unaffiliated" which includes atheist, agnostic, and "nothing in particular."

The interactive map shows how faiths and traditions break down by state.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/graphics/pew-religion-08/flash.htm>



## Key Points on the Crisis in the Horn of Africa

The worst drought in 60 years has caused a massive humanitarian crisis. Famine has been declared in five regions of Somalia. At least 12.4 million people in the Horn of Africa are facing a humanitarian emergency. Poor March to May rains caused scarce pasture and increased water shortages. The summer 2011 harvests have failed, and relief from the drought is now not expected until December.

<http://www.bread.org/hunger/global/eastern-africa-drought/key-points.html>



## Vatican is World's Greenest State

Pope Benedict XVI has been dubbed the "green pope" and the Vatican is by far the world's most environmentally friendly greenest is green. The tiny country produces 200 watts of solar energy per inhabitant as compared to 80 in Germany, considered the world leader. In two years, the Vatican has saved an estimated 89.84 tons of oil equivalent.

Plans are underway to have the pope replace his gasoline powered popemobile with one that runs on solar energy.

## Annual Meeting of Carmelite NGO 2011 Meet Brings New Energy

The members of the Carmelite NGO Coordinating Team met at the Divine Word Missionary College SVD in Sankt Augustin, near Bonn, Germany for their annual meeting.

Each member gave a report on the activities in their area of responsibility during the past year. It has been a particularly active year with various meetings and projects undertaken.

For the coming year, the members will focus on the development of position papers. The first paper, our NGO's position on the environment, is in process and will be released shortly after the beginning of 2012.

The NGO has agreed to publish the top five essays in the contest run by the Order's General Council's Commission of Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation. Each will be published in English as well as their original language on the NGO website.

To facilitate information to the members of the 2013 General Chapter of the Order, the booklet introducing the Carmelite NGO, which was published a few years ago in English, will be translated into Spanish and Italian.

The themes for the popular "Days of Prayer" were selected: Human Rights Day, December 10, will be hunger in Eastern Africa; World Environment Day, June 5, will be Trees-Environment.

The next meeting of the Carmelite NGO Coordinating Team will be held in New York on September 3-4, 2012, prior to the DPI/NGO meeting of the United Nations.

*continued from page 2*

opment at the centre of international policy making and at the centre of civic engagement worldwide. The Conference was a crucial step towards meeting that goal, he stressed.

The 1992 Rio Conference did represent a watershed and a commitment by governments. Governments, however, are viewed as having failed to deliver on those promises. According to remarks by Daniel Mittler, Political Director of Greenpeace International, governments were not the only ones to blame. There were corporations that had caused governments to fail through policies that sought to benefit the few at the expense of the many. Yet, despite the failures, changes are happening.

Looking forward to the "Rio+20" United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Secretary-General said science had made it clear that the world's citizens were contributing to dangerous climate change and exhausting the planet's capacity to guarantee a sustainable future. The solution lay in a fundamental transformation of consumption patterns and life styles.

Those changes will require, among other things, creating a sustainable green economy that would protect the environment and help achieve the Millennium Development Goal. However, change would not occur overnight, and would not be possible without the involvement of all sectors of society, he warned. "Your voices, your actions, and your grassroots organizations can help to move us closer to our goals," the Secretary-General said, emphasizing that all non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively, had an important role to play.

<sup>4</sup> "We need your networks and your best ideas," the Secretary-General added.



**Helen Ojario, O. Carm.**, director of the Carmelite NGO's New York office, in a small group discussion during the Bonn DPI/NGO conference. (Photo courtesy of \_\_\_\_\_)

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