

PASSIONISTS INTERNATIONAL

July 2006



The United Nations has increasingly taken up the cause of indigenous people, who are considered among the world's most disadvantaged groups.



Three of the issues that Passionists International is working on at the UN remind us of how we are bound together. They also show us how the crises we face are caused by gross imbalances.

- Migration
- HIV and AIDS Pandemic
- The cry of Indigenous Peoples for justice and their place in the sun.

Indigenous Peoples of the World meet in New York

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues weaves together many of the big issues facing our world today. In the present plight of indigenous women and men in more than 70 countries we see real challenges to our humanity and our compassion.

- They are among the poorest and the most marginal in the world
- Compared to other groups their health is poorer, their lives shorter, more of their children die before their 5th birthday and too many mothers die bringing new life into the community.
- Their traditional way of life and culture are threatened by Corporations and governments grabbing their lands and resources.
- Their human rights are regularly violated.

- Their traditional knowledge is taken and patented for the purposes of money by pharmaceutical and drug companies.
- They often find their world view, built on respect for the Spirit and community, threatened by the dominant world view of consumerism and individualism.

From all over the world they came for two weeks in May for the 5th session of the Forum where they can make known their concerns and bring recommendations to the UN so that they might find justice. Hope and a sense that 'together we are strong' were obvious in the meeting as they demand that their values and vision must be heard by their governments if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met for all people. To learn more visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi>.



“20 years ago one third of people infected with HIV were women. “Today it has climbed to nearly half. In the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, many more women than men are being infected, with about 75 per cent of all HIV-positive women living in sub-Saharan Africa, while in the United States, AIDS is now the leading cause of death for African-American women.”

Thoraya Obaid
UNFPA Executive Director



High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS

May 31 – June 2 saw a gathering of government ministers, NGOs, religious groups etc to review the progress made by governments in the commitments they made in 2001 to deal with the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS that not only takes peoples lives, but destroys families, communities, economies and whole countries.

8000 people die every day around the world of AIDS.

Again people were reminded that global crises need global planning and solutions. Each of us and every government must be willing to work together to deal with this crisis facing the world.

We are all in the one boat and the boat is taking too

much water! To learn more about the meeting go to <http://www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2006>



There are many Passionist Sisters and Brothers working with the victims of this pandemic in many countries.

Welcome Carolina!

We welcome Carolina Fojo, sister of Todd who is a year-long volunteer in Honduras with

Passionist Volunteers International. Carolina has just completed her first year at Washington University in St. Louis. This is the first time that Passionists International has had a volunteer to work with us. Please God she will be the first of many to share in our work on behalf of justice at the UN.

International Migration and Development

In September, the General Assembly will have a dialogue on the topic of International Migration and Development. This will take place at the level of Heads of State or Ministers of Immigration and Development.

July 12 will see a day of consultation between Civil Society (NGOs, unions, the private sector etc.) and the Member States of the UN. The President of the General Assembly Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden will chair the meeting and the ideas expressed will be presented to the government members prior to the September dialogue. Migration is one of the burning issues of the day.

Passionists International has taken the lead in bringing together a working group of religious communities to try and insert into the debate the aspects of human dignity and human rights, an approach to development that is not merely economic, but is people centred.

We are asking our members round the world who work with people affected by migration to send us stories about the human face and the impact of migration on family and community life, trafficking in persons, to Kevin Dance in New York at kvndance@yahoo.com.au so that this information can become part of the

discussion.

A few days ago President Jacques Chirac of France, speaking on migration, said "The solution lies first through development." He called for innovative financing and other support for countries in Africa to tackle migration at its origins. Approaching migration as a border or sovereignty issue alone will not resolve the need of millions of people to leave their homes to search for a better life and to send money home to support their families. An integral approach is vital to address the question of why people must leave home in the first place. Again we come to the gross imbalances between the rich north and the impoverished south.



To learn more about Passionists International at the United Nations go to: www.passionistworld.org

Migrants are a particularly vulnerable group and see their rights routinely violated, not only as workers, but as human beings. They are more and more targeted as the scapegoats for all manner of domestic problems facing societies today, particularly unemployment, crime, drugs, even terrorism.

