

J/P Alert

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN *JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE*

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CMSM:

- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
- *provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

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Robinson Challenges Religious in US to Promote Millennium Declaration Goals

During her keynote address at the CMSM-LCWR Joint Assembly in Ft. Worth, Texas on August 20, Dr. Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, challenged the leaders of US religious institutes to “move on from proclaiming the rights of people and the obligations those rights give to the realization of those rights and obligations in practice.” As a step toward making this a reality, she suggested focusing attention on the UN Millennium Declaration.

For many, Dr. Robinson’s mention of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Challenge Account, was the first time members had heard any extended exposition of the UN program that has identified making “globalization work for all the world’s people” presented to them. Dr. Robinson told the participants that “the Millennium Declaration stressed the need for sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity.” Religious have been concerned about the effects of globalization for years, and while conferences have addressed the negative aspects of globalization, there has been little reflection on how to use globalization for the good of millions of people who could benefit from it if nations, international organizations, and civil

society fashioned programs to meet the needs of the global community.

The Millennium Declaration is an ambitious agenda to significantly improve the human condition by 2015. There are eight goals with 48 indicators that set clear targets for reducing poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. These goals are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar day and reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4. Reduce child mortality. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five.
5. Improve maternal health. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Halt and begin to reverse the

- incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 millions slum dwellers by 2020.
 8. Develop a global partnership for development. opening trade and financial systems that are rule-based, predictable, and non-discriminatory; address the needs of least developed countries; deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems; develop decent and productive work for youth; provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; make available the benefits of new technology – especially information and communication technologies.

In response to the Millennium Declaration, President Bush established the Millennium Challenge Account, to earmark US funding to assist with achieving the goals of the Millennium Declaration. This account could increase by 50 percent US development assistance if added to the current foreign aid budget.

According to a CRS report: “The US government in 2001 spent the largest total amount – \$10 billion – for development assistance to poor countries. However, based on our wealth as a nation, the US can afford to give more. Today, the US designates only a little more than one tenth of one percent of all its available resources, to non-military foreign aid. That means that we spend only about 11 cents of every \$100 we earn as a nation to assist other countries. This ranks us last among the world’s 22 wealthiest nations.

“As the world’s wealthiest nation, the US should be the leader, both in policy and practice, in international efforts to reduce poverty in the poorest countries. To build on the successes of foreign development assistance, the US should increase substantially the level of assistance it provides for economic and social development for the world’s most impoverished people.”

Congress enacted legislation creating the Millennium Challenge Account and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a board that will have oversight and give

direction to the funding. Mr. Ken Hackett, President of Catholic Relief Services, has been named to the Board of Directors.

Dr. Robinson called on the religious leaders to support the goals of the Millennium Declaration and to work in the US to urge the Administration and Congress to fully fund the Millennium Challenge Account and to ensure that funds are directed to the poorest nations and to programs that will be of benefit to the most needy and vulnerable.

In addition, religious have a special role in promoting the Millennium Declaration goals by keeping a focus on the “human elements of security, of rights, and of development.” At a time when the US is focusing on national security, and the Administration uses language that equates freedom with “Almighty God’s freedom,” religious, she says, must draw on our “spiritual values, to make it clear that freedom should encompass broader human security.” The goals of the Millennium Declaration would lead to greater human security and break down many of the divisions that create the conditions for the rise of terrorism and conflict.

A copy of Dr. Robinson’s address is on the CMSM website at www.cmsm.org. A copy of the Millennium Declaration will also be posted on the website. CMSM and LCWR are represented at the UN through DPI/NGO status. More information on the Millennium Declaration goals and the Millennium Challenge Account will be published in future J/P Alerts and posted on the CMSM website.

Save the Dates

Make all Things New: Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice. March 11-14, 2005. Washington, DC.

The third annual ecumenical gathering addressing urgent global issues. Focus on critical regions and issues including Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, eco-justice, and Jubilee and economic justice. Featuring challenging speakers, issue briefing, advocacy training and a Lobby Day on Capitol Hill. For registration and more information go to www.AdvocacyDays.org.

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