



DEAR READERS,

Welcome to the 55th Online Issue of the VIVAT Newsletter!

Approaching the close of the year it is a perfect time to reflect upon and be grateful for the achievements and success accomplished during the past months. The newsletter opens with just such a message from Maria Theresa Hörnemann, SSpS the president of VIVAT international. As an organization VIVAT has grown with the full membership of The Congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC) and VIVAT has also expanded geographically with the establishment of national branches in Bolivia, India and Argentina.

The newsletter also highlights workshops facilitated by VIVAT throughout the world in Indonesia and the Philippines as well as meeting members based in Lisbon, Portugal. The executive team also had an opportunity to introduce VIVAT's vision, mission, history and its strategy for advocacy and lobbying to the participants of the first international SSpS JPIC seminar. Looking forward to the work that still has to be done articles featuring the struggle for a fair and just constitution in Sudan are featured along with an article articulating the struggle of the millions who go missing, specifically addressing the recent trials of Argentina.

You inspire us! We always welcome feedback, ideas, stories, and updates from our members! Please send your comments and feedback to: viny@vivatinternational.org

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Contributing Writers

- Maria Theresia ssp, Rodrigo Salzar svd,*
- Maria Jose Rebelo ssp, Paul Rahmat svd,*
- John Converset mccj, Raimundo Rocha mccj,*
- Edward Vasquez omi, Joy Mary Climaco ssp,*
- Maria de Lourdes ssp, Edward Flynn csp,*
- Malou Cadelina Manar, Michael Gallagher*

Translators

- Juan Domingo Griffone, SCJ*
- Roberto Garcia Murcuego, SCJ*
- Spanish**

- Simone Petra Hanel, SSpS*
- German**

- Edni Gugelmin, SSpS*
- Portuguese**

Proof-reader

- Judy Cates*

NEW YORK +1 646 478 0003 **GENEVA** +41 022 796 991

viny@vivatinternational.org
geneva@vivatinternational.org

A word from the President of VIVAT International



Maria Theresia Hörnemann, SSpS

As we approach the end of the year 2012, we look back with gratitude at the developments that have taken place under the umbrella of VIVAT International:

- We thank Father Antonio Pernia SVD for his love and efforts for the life and growth of VIVAT International. Not only was he involved in the foundation of VI from the very beginning, but he generously took over the presidency for the last 3 ½ years and contributed much to what VIVAT International is today. Thank you Father Toni! Enjoy your Sabbatical time. We count on your support wherever you are and whatever you will do in the future!
- We welcome Father Heinz Kulüke, the new Superior General of the SVDs as Vice President. We look forward to meeting Father Heinz in our next board meetings.
- The Congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC) became full member of VI.
- Two new Congregations have been accepted as associate members: the Sacred-Heart Fathers (Dehonians) and the Religious of Assumption.
- New national branches of VIVAT International have been approved: Bolivia, India and Argentina. National branches make it possible to have a greater impact in policies within their respective countries.

- VIVAT International Charter and Statutes have been approved and printed in five languages (English, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish).
- VIVAT International has had incremental success in making a difference as it raised awareness at the national and international levels in issues of mining - special focus on the situation of Peru, trafficking, migration, climate change, poverty eradication, women and girls, as well as extensive preparation for and participation in the conference Rio+20 in Brazil, workshops in Indonesia and Philippines; seminar in Netherlands and meeting in Portugal.
- VIVAT Workshops in different parts of the world have helped members to understand the importance and function of VIVAT International better and to take active part in creating a flow of information between those who work at the grassroots and those who shape policies.
- After all we have learned to understand more deeply that VIVAT is ours. Let us remember this as we look back with gratitude and look forward with hope. The joy of the shepherds and angels reflects the joy that is ours as we, too, announce to the nations God's message of hope in our efforts for justice and peace here and now.



Merry Christmas and a *Blessed New Year*

Advent is a time when we can experience more deeply the hope of the nations: God comes to be with us! In different parts of the world we see hardship and suffering as people struggle to recover from natural disasters and/or experience the tragedies of war and violence. In the light of all this how much greater is our challenge to be messengers of Gospel peace and love.

VIVAT International is an important part of our united efforts to bring about a more peaceful world, a climate of respect for life in all its forms. We need faith and hope to continue to speak out and to work for justice and peace when we are over flooded with information about violence and war, calamities and manmade disasters that bring so much suffering to so many people. May this time of preparation for Christmas deepen our desire to be co-creators of a World God was dreaming of as he decided to incarnate in this very world and to share our human conditions. We are called to continue to share this story of God's love for all people by working towards justice, peace and integrity of Creation. Perhaps a moment of silence and reflection on Jesus, incarnated into our World, exposed to suffering and death, determined not to react with violence but to respond with words of truth and actions of unconditional love can be as powerful as any activity in this area. It can strengthen our faith and deepen our desire to continue to join hands in this mission as sisters and brothers believing that we can make a difference.

A joyful Christmas to you and to all the members of your Congregations!

THANK YOU for all the collaboration during the past year! BLESSINGS for the year ahead of us.

Maria Theresia Hörnemann, SSpS
VIVAT International President

VIVAT International, Philippines Workshop

Forty-four members of religious organizations and their lay partners all over the Philippines renewed their commitment to uphold human rights, seek justice, promote peace, and preserve the integrity of creation through the workshop of VIVAT International which took place from Nov. 26-30.

Eduardo Vasquez, assistant program coordinator of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, said the birth of VIVAT International in the country signals the beginning of intensified efforts to defend or protect human rights and to give voice to the 'poor'.

In a statement, the group said they gathered together to learn how advocates of VIVAT International carried out the ministry or advocacy on justice, peace, and integrity of creation in their missions. From these stories, the group identified major issues, which confront the country and its people.

"Inspired by the inputs and motivated by the vision and mission of VIVAT International, we renew our commitment to uphold human rights by working towards the eradication of poverty; restoring the rights of indigenous peoples; preserving creation; promoting sustainable development; and working for structural and political change," said the group.

The participants had a lengthy exchange of diverse ideas and deliberation in identifying one or two issues for advocacy at the National level. Finally, **corruption** and **mining** were the chosen issues at the National level for Advocacy. JPIC issues are indeed complex, thus, the participants realized the great need for and value of networking.

The other issue mentioned was the framework agreement on *Bangsamoro* (FAB), a draft agreement signed in early October this year by the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The agreement is a product of years of negotiations between the GPH and the MILF in the hope of resolving conflicts in Mindanao.



Participants to the VIVAT International Workshop-Philippines sign the official report and statement after a four-day workshop held at Saint Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center in Quezon City. In a statement, the group says they renewed their commitment to uphold human rights, seek justice, promote peace, and preserve the integrity of creation.

The parenting of trees would affirm the integrity of creation

As one of the highlights of the workshop, they planted three seedlings, which symbolize the birth of VIVAT International-Philippines. The three seedlings also represent the islands of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, which stand for unity despite the diversity of cultures and history of different peoples.

The VIVAT International-Philippines is composed of religious congregations, which include the SSpS, SVD, CSSp, ASC, MCCJ, OMI, LSA, RA, SCJ. There are 951 members of VIVAT International working in the Philippines.

Vasquez said the support of VIVAT International team "gave them the courage to stand for the rights and respect the dignity of each person, especially those of women and children at the grassroots level."

VIVAT International is an NGO that was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations and on ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.



Photos by: Eduardo Vasquez, OMI

VIVAT International, Indonesia Workshop

On September 24 –29, 2012 VIVAT International held a workshop for its members in Indonesia and Timor Leste at the Retreat House of Siloam in Kuwu, West Flores – Indonesia. The workshop was attended by 80 participants mostly coming from the islands of Kalimantan, Sumatra, Jawa, Flores, West Timor, West Papua and Timor Leste. Aside from VIVAT Indonesia members, other participants were a few diocesan priests, laywomen and men as JPIC co-workers at the grassroots level.



Participants of the workshop VIVAT International, Indonesia

The provinces of SVD Ruteng and of SSps West Flores were host provinces of the workshop, collaborating with the national secretariat of VIVAT International-Indonesia. At least 16 local communities and groups of SVD, SSps and the Sister-Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration (SSps AP) in West Flores voluntarily supported the workshop including SETIA BAKTI Senior High School and IMMACULATA Junior High School run by SSps West Flores Province.

The participants were welcomed with a *kepok* ritual, a welcoming ceremony according to Manggarai custom. It symbolizes the warm acceptance of honorable and special guests and a sign of recognition that the guests have entered into and have been a part of Manggarai community

The workshop was enriched with a lively daily liturgy celebrated in accordance with local enculturation. The themes of the liturgy typically reflected the JPIC values such as life, justice, peace, and integrity of creation, stewardship for creation, mission, gratitude and service for humanity.

In the midst of the busy week of workshop, the participants had a chance to enjoy the cultural evening performance organized by SETIA BAKTI High School and IMMACULATA Junior High School. After the cultural event, the community of SSps Sisters of Perpetual Adoration invited the participants to celebrate Holy Mass and also

take supper at their Convent. The VIVAT International workshop event was a kind of “three in one special encounter” gathering all members of the Arnoldus Family (SVD, SSps, and SSps-AP) and sitting together at the same table of the Lord’s banquet, marked with fraternal and sisterly support for one another.

Highlighting the theme “working for justice, promoting peace, preserving lives”, the participants shared their best practices and challenges in carrying on JPIC work and also raised focal issues and concerns they faced at the grassroots communities. The issues, among others, included human trafficking, AIDS/HIV, domestic and public violations of the rights of women and children, poverty, migrant workers, mining, violation and repression against the indigenous Papuans in West Papua and Dayak People in Kalimantan, deforestation, expansion of palm oil plantation, thrash, water/river contamination, social conflict and the frequent massacres of Papuans.

Coping with the issues, the participants have been aware of and were reinforced by the input of some resource persons about the essential spirituality of JPIC work based on biblical perspectives, social Church Social Teaching and the spirituality of the Kingdom as well as the local wisdom and knowledge of grassroots communities.

The presence and support of the Executive Team of VIVAT International gave new

hope to the participants in advocating for human dignity of persons and human rights, including the dignity and the basic rights of women, children and indigenous people in particular through the use of available mechanisms and procedures at international forums, the United Nations in particular. In the light of the complexity of the issues as well as considering the strength, opportunities and challenges the participants cope with, three issues were chosen as focus and priorities of VIVAT Indonesia work in the next three years. They are as follows:

lows:

1. Raising awareness and building the capacity of VIVAT-Indonesia members to involve themselves to work for justice, promote peace and preserve lives.
2. Prevent human trafficking and restore the dignity of the victims.
3. Protect the environment and natural resources by opposing mining operations.

In addition, the selected priorities have been clearly articulated in the three-years plan of action for VIVAT International-Indonesia. VIVAT Indonesia was the first national branch of VIVAT International approved by the Board of Directors of VIVAT International in July 2009. It becomes a Jakarta-based national NGO also which was officially recognized by the Minister of Law and Human Rights Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on July 31st, 2012. The members of VIVAT Indonesia encompass the four congregations of SVD, SSps, OMI and SCJ. Yet it has 2,300 members consisting of 11 provinces and two regions and working in Indonesia and Timor Leste.

According to Lukas Jua SVD, as an immediate result of the workshop, just a few days after the workshop a 15-year-old girl from Timor, who was a victim of human trafficking in Sumatra, was able to return to her home thanks to the collaboration among VIVAT members, especially SCJ in Sumatra and SSps in Jawa and Timor.

The First SSps International JPIC Seminar

On October 1-21, 2012 at the SSps Mother House in Steyl, Netherlands, the SSps International JPIC Seminar was held for the first time, with all the 44 SSps Provinces and Regions in 48 countries represented. Also among the participants were all seven members of the SSps Congregational Leadership Team, as well as four SVD JPIC Zonal Coordinators.

Over the three weeks, resource persons and all participants deepened the theme – **“Choose Life”** and each one’s commitment to life, justice, peace and integrity of creation. The whole experience called and challenged everyone to live the Gospel values with new perceptions and understanding of JPIC in today’s world.

Through various presentations, the group were led to revisit and reflect on Self, the Scriptures, the Social Teachings of the Church, the SSps/SVD Founding Generation, and the SSps Constitutions and General Chapter Documents. The Realities of the World and the Church, Connectedness with the Universe (New Cosmology), Mysticism, Prophecy, and Restorative Justice were some of the topics highlighted during the seminar. The process of the Pastoral Cycle of See, Judge and Act helped to deepen understanding of various issues. A strong emphasis was made on the SSps Chapter Directions, particularly on Non Violence and Integrity of Creation.

The participants were united in expressing that the seminar experience led them to be afire and committed with a greater determination in making **JPIC A WAY OF LIFE**. This commitment was spelled out in their Statement as:

“In the light of our 13th General Chapter Directions and this JPIC Seminar, we commit ourselves to the following:



1. integrate JPIC into all our communities and ministries

2. care for the Integrity of Creation

3. consciously choose non-violence as a way of life

4. respond creatively to the realities of our times where life is most threatened

5. network within/between our Provinces/Regions, VIVAT International, the SSpsAP, SVD, laity and others

6. Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation are core values of our Congregation. Our Founding Generation have shown us the way to respond to the realities of their time especially to the people living in poverty. We commit to continue their spirituality, vision and mission in today’s world.”

Maria Theresia Hörnemann, the SSps Congregational Leader and the president of VIVAT International, in her closing remarks, gave a word of thanks and encouragement to all the participants. She enjoined everyone to carry on the fruits of the seminar, making JPIC indeed a way of life for all the members of the Congregation.

It was very appropriate that the Closing Mass of the JPIC Seminar took place on Mission Sunday. Through a ritual of planting a seed, each one is commissioned: to return to one’s own Province or Region with a great responsibility, to take care of the “seed” so that it can grow and flourish, and to show the unity of the group as they continue planting in their own countries.



Special Rapporteur visits Italy

The urgent need to re-affirm people's rights and responsibilities

From the 1st to the 8th of October 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, carried out his third country visit in Italy for his regional study on the human rights of migrants within the borders of the European Union.

In July 2012 the contact persons of VIVAT in Rome received the information about this visit from the office of VIVAT in New York and then through ongoing communications and with combined efforts, it was possible to assure the presence of our organization at the meeting that the SR organized for NGOs in Rome on the 4th of October 2012. The encounter with the civil society is important for the visit of any UN rapporteur, as it guarantees the exchange of more independent views and information on the issues at stake than what government agencies are at times willing to give. Few Catholic NGOs were invited to the meeting, yet we were convinced that the contribution of one sister could be very significant. Eugenia Bonetti MC, head of the anti-trafficking desk of the Conference of Religious Women in Italy, has been battling for years against the way the Italian system is treating undocumented migrants, detaining them in centers under conditions that are as bad, or even worse, than prisons. Though her congregation is not a member of VIVAT, she could represent our values and interests with competence, taking advantage of her known international reputation as well to add weight to her testimony.

The SR was particularly interested in knowing the complex legal system that regulates the legalization and protection of migrants entering Europe through the Italian borders, whether by land or sea. According to Eugenia, the Rapporteur was very attentive to the knowledgeable information given by the representatives of civil society regarding various situa-

tions. Through her intervention she made sure that he could not end his visit with a favorable view of the centers of detention and expulsion (CIE) where many women suffer incredible constraints only because they do not have a regular visa. (see the full report of Eugenia Bonetti, MC at http://www.famigliacristiana.it/chiesa/noi-donne-oggi/blog/noi-donne-oggi_180211083338/hanno-ancora-senso-i-cie-in-italia.aspx)

We believe that the SR was receptive to the instances presented at his encounter with NGOs, as we can read from his report to the European Commission. He clearly stated that:

“The conditions of detention in CIEs vary considerably, with two of the CIEs visited exhibiting significantly substandard conditions. Lack of proper activities, arbitrariness of decision making, insufficient medical care, lack of access to lawyers and NGOs, and poor facilities add to detainees’ frustrations. Overall, a nation-wide comprehensive regulatory framework must be strengthened, taking advantage of the best practices observed in the present network of CIEs and in other facilities in Europe and around the world, and in accordance with international human rights law. In particular, the application of a maximum period of detention of 18 months, although provided for under the EU Return Directive, is excessive in order to identify someone[...]. In a similar vein, Italian authorities should also develop a series of alternatives to detention for migrants who pose no risk to the community and have ties to the country. Two categories of persons with whom I met in the CIEs should in particular be offered such alternatives, with procedural paths to access residence permits: stateless persons (especially when born or raised in Italy) and migrants who have been living in Italy for some time (sometimes for decades), where they have established a professional and family life”.

In view of the fact that humanitarian organizations face great difficulty when arranging to visit the centers and organize activities for the immigrants detained,

something that was presented at the encounter, the report of the SR clearly recommends that :

” ...Moreover, ... organizations find it difficult to access the centers at will. Thus, it is necessary to move beyond the project-based Presidium initiative and establish a nation-wide institutional framework in which NGOs, international organizations, journalists and lawyers can freely access and monitor the facilities, and the implementation of recommendations is transparent and easily monitored.” (see the full report at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12640&LangID=E>)

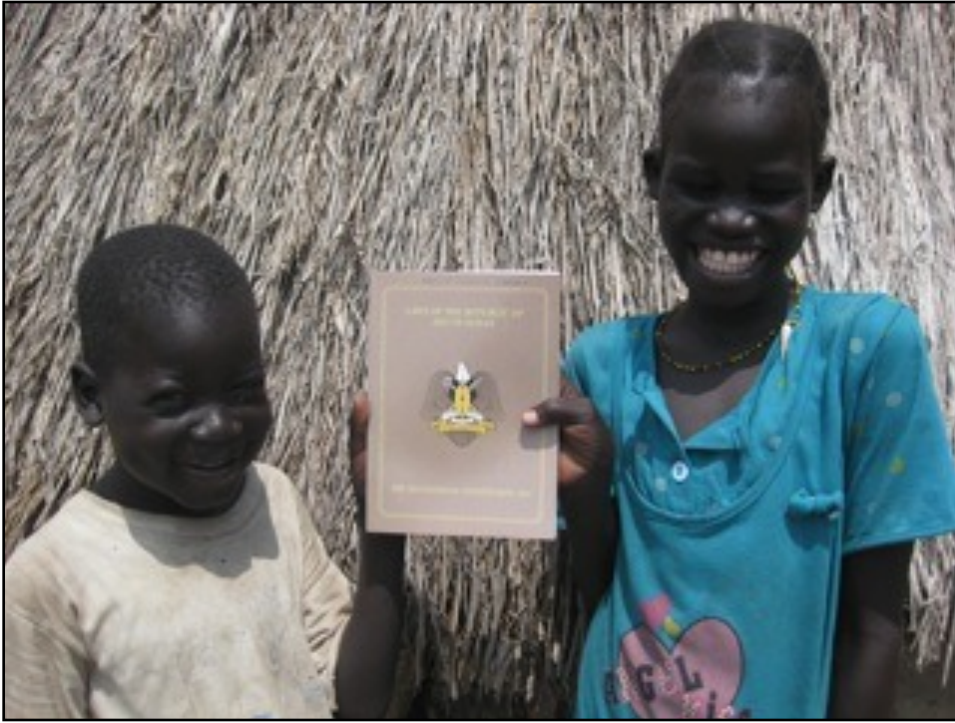
The report of the SR may not have a huge impact on the Italian legal system or on the broader European management of borders in regard to migrants, yet, we believe that our contribution in these types of UN visitations or in other similar events, small as it may be, is necessary. To say the contrary would be paramount to affirming that we have no role to play in forwarding the values of the Gospel in the palaces of the powerful and that we retreat to safer ground, where the spiritual does not seek to encounter our human history.

The collaboration between our group in Rome and the New York office made this initiative possible. I am wondering: if more of it could become the normal way of living VIVAT, much more of our contribution could perhaps reach the palaces where decisions are taken and let the voice of Justice and Peace speak louder.

More than 800 representatives from civil society and governments from some 160 countries gathered in Mauritius November 19-22 to discuss changes needed in labour migration, protection of migrants, promotion of their rights and development.

South Sudan's Constitution

The urgent need to re-affirm people's rights and responsibilities



South Sudan drew everyone's attention when it became the world's newest nation on 9th July 2011. However, long before that this African region came to be known for its more than two decades of civil war which resulted in the death of over two million people and generated an enormous humanitarian crisis. Thankfully the war ended in 2005 and South Sudan stands now as an independent country with the huge task to build a nation.

In this process of nation building, there is an important ongoing event to which little attention has been given by local and international media. It is the making of the National Constitution. Why is the Constitution so important for South Sudan? It is important because the supreme law should take into account principles of democracy, human rights, political participation at every level and lay the basis for effective governance.

In other words, it should lay out the structures and powers of the government and the rights and duties of the people. It should also help to make a break from the past, embody the hopes and aspirations of the people and provide them with a vision for the future. This does not necessarily mean that the Constitution will bring about immediate and effective changes, but it is in-

deed an important step in the nation-building process which should show the way forward for the country to develop with peace, justice and prosperity for all.

Another reason why the Constitution is important lies in the fact that citizens should be involved in the law making process and offered a unique opportunity to design the kind of country they need. In this regard, Salva Kiir, the President of South Sudan, said that the Constitution is to "be a way for all South Sudanese to come together to unite in a common purpose so as to build the nation". Therefore, people are given the opportunity to reaffirm their rights and responsibilities.

Actually, the Constitution of South Sudan has been in the making since 2005. After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), an Interim Constitution was drafted, revised and officially passed by the Transitional Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly. A few years later, just after the January 9th referendum, the Interim Constitution was revised, adopted with few changes and promulgated by the President as the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan on July 9th 2011.

It needs to be said, though, that up to this point there was no concerted effort to involve the citizens in the process of making

the Transitional Constitution. However, a National Constitutional Review Commission was established on 9th January 2012 and given the task to travel around the country and collect views from the citizens. The law making process was to enter into a new phase.

At the launching of this commission the President said that "this Constitution is to be a document for *all* the people of South Sudan. The process of making the Constitution, therefore, must be inclusive. Every person, regardless of ethnicity, gender, education, status or wealth, has the right to voice opinions on the text, to participate in the process".

Ten months later it seems that little has been achieved by the National Constitutional Review Commission. Actually, this Commission has barely started its work and it seems very unlikely that it will be able to complete its task by the deadline of 9th January 2013. A proper public consultation process has not happened so far as expected. Has it been intentional on the part of the government so that a draft of the Constitution will come out on its own terms? Many people would say so.

The good news is that there is a great willingness among faith leaders and civil society to work towards a solid Constitution that will serve the interests of the South Sudanese people. In fact, some constitutional workshops have been conducted across the country to allow further dialogue on the Constitution at grassroots levels, to educate citizens on constitutional issues and raise concerns on critical parts of the national law of South Sudan.

When the National Constitutional Review Commission was convened by President Kiir he said that "a crucial phase of nation-building process, which will lead to a Permanent Constitution in 2013" has begun. The process is still on. The next phase will be the Constitutional Assembly. However, if the Constitution is to be a document for all the people of South Sudan, then the period of the Constitution Commission and for the Constitutional Assembly needs to be extended to allow the citizens greater participation on the National Constitution.

Disappearances - *The Fate of the Missing*

Many people, who go 'missing' are safely located after a short absence. In a world where travel is made easy, such disappearances can be clearly explained and readily understood. Personal reasons or family tensions may explain many of these incidents. And there is always great rejoicing when a missing person is reunited with relatives.

But there is a more haunting side to 'disappearances'. Many will remember the film 'Missing' from the 80s. It tells the story of an American journalist who disappears during the Right wing coup in Chile. The year was 1973. The film was based on true events.

When someone - a loved one, - is snatched away, there is complete uncertainty and insecurity. By whom have they been taken? - we don't know. Where are they detained? - we don't know. Will they return? - we don't know. Disquiet enters the lives of family and friends. Souls begin to decay. "Everywhere in the world, families of the disappeared go through continuous emotional and material hardship and years of uncertainty as to the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones," said UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kyung-wha Kang.

These 'disappearances' are often caused by governments, their military rulers or agents of the State. Some Latin American countries were notorious in this regard during the 70s. Tens of thousands of young men and women disappeared. Some have not been traced to this day. Often it has been the persistence of parents and relatives that has forced the governments to take action to discover the truth about the disappearances.

For many years, in the 70s and 80s, "The mothers of the Plaza de Mayo", came to Geneva to seek the help of the international community as they searched for their daughters, sons and grandchildren.

Under Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the 'Enforced disappearance of persons', is considered to be a crime against humanity. On 20 December 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In some countries street gangs or criminals engage in similar activities. Members of an opposing gang are kidnapped, tortured and then their bodies are disposed of in secret burial places. Meanwhile their families are left to grieve in the wilderness.

Some regimes cause their political rivals to disappear without trace. Without knowledge of their whereabouts it is difficult to search for them. And if the culprits of such actions are not brought before the law, the legal system itself suffers, and people lose confidence in the justice system. Such arbitrary actions as these, still occur and have gone on for too long. They have to stop and those in power have to be held accountable for their actions.

Renditions: As part of the "war on terror" the CIA and other agents of the US government detained suspected "terrorists" and secretly transported them to third countries. In this way the prisoners could be tortured for information and the US government could deny that it was responsible for torture. No one knows how many people were "disappeared" in this way, how many may still be detained and how many were secretly executed. Certainly hundreds of such "renditions" were carried out.

Central Americans travelling across Mexico to reach the USA are frequently kidnapped, trafficked or made "drug mules" to transport drugs into the USA. Those who refuse to cooperate are often murdered in cold blood and buried in remote places. Occasionally bodies are left in public places to terrorize others.

Getting to Know the UN: UNICEF

More than a year after WWII, many nations of the world were struggling to recover from the devastation caused by the war. Famine and disease were common and children were among the most vulnerable.

The fledgling United Nations General Assembly responded with the creation of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Today it is simply called the United Nations Children's fund.



"We ought to do everything in our power to ensure girls can become all they can be."
Desmond Tutu

Since its founding UNICEF has saved more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization. UNICEF currently operates in more than 150 countries and territories and is funded entirely by voluntary contributions of individuals, foundations, corporations, nongovernmental organizations and governments.

For more information: www.unicef.org

VIVAT News Brief



December 4 – The United Nations [launched](#) a \$1.3 billion humanitarian appeal to address the immediate needs of the Somali people over the next year and enhance resilience in the country, which has for decades been mired in conflict, drought, floods and food insecurity. The appeal, which is part of a three-year strategy, will go to 369 humanitarian projects targeting 3.8 million Somalis in need, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)). The strategy will be implemented by 177 national and international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies operating in Somalia.



November 29 – The General Assembly voted to grant Palestine non-member observer State status at the United Nations, while expressing the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians leading to a permanent two-State solution. The resolution on the status of Palestine in the UN was adopted by a vote of 138 in favour to nine against with 41 abstentions by the 193-member Assembly.



November 12 – The General Assembly elected 18 States to serve on the Human Rights Council, the United Nations key forum for tackling entrenched human rights concerns around the world. Those elected were Argentina, Brazil, Côte d’Ivoire, Estonia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Montenegro, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Venezuela. All would serve three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2013. These States are the first round of Council members whose terms of office would begin on 1 January, and not in June.



June 8 – The United Nations General Assembly elected Serbia’s Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremic, as the President of the upcoming 67th session of the Assembly. Made up of all the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the General Assembly provides a forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the UN Charter. It meets in regular session intensively from September to December each year, and thereafter as required.



Every three seconds a girl somewhere in the world becomes a child bride; one in three girls marries before her 18th birthday. October 11th was the first United Nations International Day of the Girl. The purpose of dedicating a day to the rights of girls is to get people talking about issues like child marriage that have such a devastating impact on the fulfillment of girls’ potential and the enjoyment of their human rights. To mark this important occasion, several events were held at the UN headquarters in New York.

UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women organized the events of the International Day of the Girl. A photo exhibit titled “Too Young to Wed” opened the evening of the 11th October. High-level panel discussions also took place, the panel participants included well-known Bishop Desmond Tutu who spoke with representatives of UNICEF and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Other participants during the day included Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda and a group of independent UN human rights experts.

Source: UN News Center

Beyond 2015

Beyond 2015 is a global civil society campaign, pushing for a follow up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The framework created to reach the MDGs will expire in 2015 and Beyond 2015 is an effort to have a strong and legitimate successor framework to the MDGs. The main goals of the Millennium Development are the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, gender equality, reduced child mortality, improved maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, and a global partnership for development. Beyond 2015 is a civil society campaign consisting of over 380 organizations from

around the world whose goal is to keep the completion of those tasks on track.

For more information visit:
<http://beyond2015.org/>

The campaign is designed to facilitate the cooperation between civil society and organizations from the North and South. It is inspired by one vision with the hope that:

- A global overarching cross-thematic framework succeeds the Millennium Development Goals, reflecting Beyond 2015's policy;
- the process of developing this framework is participatory, inclusive and responsive to voice of those directly affected by social injustice.



VIVAT International, Meeting in Portugal

On the 24th of October 2012, the SVD and SSps communities in Lisbon organized a meeting with the VIVAT International founding and associate members whose congregations are present in Portugal. These included the two congregations of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit (Sisters and Fathers), Comboni Missionaries (Sisters and Fathers) and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The meeting took place at the Divine Word Seminary in Lisbon; more than 30 members were present. These included the SSps Sisters from the two communities nearby in Lisbon, the SVDs from the Lisbon community, António Leite, representing the SVD community from Fátima, and various representative members of the 5 congregations invited.

The meeting aimed at raising awareness in the members present about the history, mission, vision, and working strategy of VIVAT International. At the end, the participants expressed their appreciation for the possibility of getting to know VIVAT International, the session was presented by the executive team of VIVAT International - Zelia Cordeiro and Felix Jones.

Upcoming Events

January	February	March
<p>January 20 JPIC Promoters Meeting Rome, Italy</p>	<p>February 6-15 Commission for Social Development New York, USA</p>	<p>March 4-15 Commission on Status of Women New York, USA</p>
<p>January 21 VIVAT Board of Directors Meeting Rome, Italy</p>	<p>February 25 - March 22 Human Rights Council 22nd session, Geneva</p>	<p>March 11-28 Human Rights Committee - 107th session, Geneva</p>