

# SHALOM/UN-NGO Newsletter

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## Arrivederci by S. Cathy Arata, SSND, outgoing International SHALOM Coordinator

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under the sun.” (Ecc.3:1)



There is a time to begin a ministry and a time to end a ministry. The time has come for me to end my ministry as the international coordinator of our SHALOM network. That means it is a time to give thanks; thanks to God for the graces received during these eight years and thanks to the leadership of the congregation who trusted, encouraged, and supported me.

And finally thanks to you my sisters and colleagues who enthusiastically joined together through our SHALOM network to listen and respond to the cries of earth and its peoples. Together we have worked for the cancellation of the unjust debt of the world's poorest countries and for an end to the trafficking of human beings. We have reflected on the Earth Charter and raised consciousness regarding the Millennium Development Goals. We have grown in our understanding of the universe story and the integrity of all creation. We have prayed and demonstrated for peace. We have walked the world to fight hunger, and we have signed petitions against the death penalty and abortion. We have joined other networks and NGOs in the promotion of women and girls and their inherent human rights.

Thank you not only for your participation in those activities but also for your initiative, creativity, and participation in local issues. Thank you to all our sisters in the Centers of Prayer for Peace throughout the congregation. Your commitment to pray for peace is a sign that we are “Women of hope who daily give our lives to bring about the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.” (*Call to Transformation*)

## Beginnings by S. Roxanne Schares, SSND, new International SHALOM Coordinator

Beginnings always hold unexpected blessings and the promise of new life. That is what I am most aware of as I become the next SSND International SHALOM Coordinator. I come to Rome and this ministry after more than 25 years in Africa, where I served as teacher, SSND vocation and novice director, and then pastoral worker, educator, and consultant among the people of the continent who have been affected by its wars.



Surely Africa and its people are in my heart, but I am ready to be stretched, to learn, and to embrace our entire international community, all God's Earth, and its peoples. I feel humbled and a bit overwhelmed by this call to be and become SHALOM and to accompany all our sisters and those who are part of our lives on this same journey.

I am challenged by the biblical meaning of SHALOM, which signifies the dynamic action of restoring all things to their original integrity according to the intention of God and manifests itself in harmonious relationships with God, self, and all creation. My deep desire and prayer is to be faithful to God's work of SHALOM among us.

## Solidarity with Southern Sudan by S. Cathy Arata, SSND

The unions of superiors general of women and men's religious congregations in Rome have responded to an invitation from the Southern Sudan Bishops' Conference to help rebuild the country and the Church after 21 years of civil war. More than 50 congregations, including SSND, have responded with a commitment of

personnel or financial donations. Specifically, the project aims to establish a teacher training program and a health care training program.



Sudan is Africa's largest country; Southern Sudan is the size of Germany and France together. Only about 7% of teachers in Southern Sudan have had any kind of teacher training. The illiteracy rate is almost 85%. Approximately 22% of the children attend school, with 2.3% completing primary schooling. There is one doctor for every 100,000 persons. Leprosy, blindness, polio, and malaria are widespread in Southern Sudan, where no more than 30–40 % of the people have access to a health center which many of them reach only after hours of walking.

Twenty-one members of the participating congregations will be ready to go to Southern Sudan within the next eighteen months to begin ministry in solidarity with the local Church.

For more information, contact Cathy Arata: [solidarity.southernsudan@yahoo.com](mailto:solidarity.southernsudan@yahoo.com)

### **SHALOM in the District of Latin America by S. Patricia Ferrick, SSND (LA)**

The spirit and values of SHALOM are alive and well among the sisters in the District of Latin America. The SHALOM report at the June District Assembly highlighted numerous activities.



**Puerto Rico:** A commitment to and action on behalf of the environment have been encouraged among students through discussions of Al Gore's documentary on global warming; students from Perpetuo Socorro Academy went on a mission to Honduras; S. Socorro Rosario Rodriguez, SSND participated in a demonstration convoked by the bishops to protest the proposed new civil code; daily prayer for peace and cleaning the beach of debris are some of the activities of the Buen Pastor Home.

**Paraguay:** World Water Day, Earth Day, and Environment Day were commemorated with special prayer services; sisters and students participated in a march against poverty and hunger.

**Chile:** World Environment Day was marked by prayer for the protection of nature and an exhibition of drawings prepared by the "Missionary Children"; the campaign against the country's disastrous mining practices was promoted.

**Peru:** There is a growing consciousness of the care of water as well as progress in the campaign to turn off lights to save energy; In northern Peru, there are demonstrations against the cutting of trees to make coal; S. Regina Palacios, SSND works to assist women and the girl child in defending their of the rights particularly regarding acts of personal violation and violence.



**Honduras:** Workshops are held to empower women regarding their working rights; sisters and those with whom they work participated in a march against hunger in Opalaca; thousands of trees were planted by school children for World Environment Day.

**Guatemala:** The sisters have written and encouraged others to write to their senators and representatives in the USA urging immigration reform; the march against hunger was given special promotion by S. Janet Druffel, SSND Director of Radio Quiche.

More and more SHALOM is becoming a way of life for the sisters in the District and for the people with whom they minister.

### **60<sup>th</sup> Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference Focuses on Global Warming by S. Ann Scholz, SSND**

Sisters Patricia Ferrick (LA), Barbara Frank (CA), Hanna Mignogno (AM), Kathleen Storms (MK), and Ann Scholz (UN Rep) will join more than 2,000 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other civil society partners from 90 countries expected to attend the September 5-7 conference organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI) in collaboration with NGO/DPI Executive Committee.



The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference will focus on action plans that address the growing concerns associated with climate change. The world is now equipped with a vast body of information, scientific as well as social and political, all pointing to the potential devastation of Earth. The conference will address solutions by helping participants to develop concrete practices that can be implemented and shared. The goal of this conference is to build knowledge of climate change into the viable habits of everyday practice that ensure a better future.

The conference will also highlight the interconnection between climate change and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As conference organizers stated, “There will be no sustainable improvement in the environment without addressing the root causes of poverty and the necessity of basic education.”

Plenary sessions will be web-cast and archived for later viewing. Check the conference website for details.

### **Join SSND Delegations to the United Nations**

Get involved in SSND work at UN ECOSOC Commissions. Educate yourself and others about the issues before the Commissions, and take those issues to prayer. If you have information or comments related to the Commissions’ agendas or would like to join a delegation, please contact Ann Scholz, SSND at [ssndunngo@earthlink.net](mailto:ssndunngo@earthlink.net).



Commission for Social Development (CSocD) February 6-15, 2008 The Commission is concerned with issues related to the well-being of all and to the promotion of people-centered development. The 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission will focus on full employment and decent work for all.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) February 25-March 7, 2008 CSW is dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. The 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CSW will focus on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year the SSND delegation will include young women from sponsored colleges.

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) May 5-16, 2008 CSD promotes dialogue, elaborates policy options, and builds partnerships for sustainable development with governments and the international community. CSD-16 will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and Africa.

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) April 21-May 2, 2008 The Permanent Forum is an advisory body to ECOSOC with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. Its 7<sup>th</sup>

Session will consider the stewardship role of indigenous peoples in climate change, bio-cultural diversity, livelihoods, and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

**Stand Up and Speak Out against Poverty and for the MDGs, October 17, 2007 by S. Ann Scholz, SSND, UN-NGO Director**

Join millions of people from around the world and [Stand Up and Speak Out](#) against poverty and inequality and for the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.



In 2000, leaders from 189 countries endorsed the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDG), a global plan to halve extreme poverty, guarantee human rights, and establish good governance by 2015.

The year 2007 marks the midway point for attaining the MDGs.. While no one goal is projected to be on track across all regions and progress in sub-Saharan Africa needs to accelerate across the board to meet the 2015 targets, there have been impressive indicators of progress since 2000.

The [Millennium Development Goals Report 2007](#) affirms that the world is on track to meet the target of halving the percent of the world's population living on less than US\$1.00 day. Primary school enrollment increased from 80% in 1990 to 88% in 2005. In Sub-Saharan Africa measles vaccination coverage went from 49% in 2000 to 64% in 2005. The number of people on antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS spiked from about 50,000 in 2003 to over 2 million in December 2006.

The 2007 MDG progress report indicates that developing countries are taking their MDG obligations seriously and are starting to reap rewards from their effort. Given the significant progress between 2000 and 2005, it is especially disappointing that rich countries are largely failing to live up to their end of the MDG deal.

This year, join the growing movement of people calling on world leaders to take action now. On October 17, 2007 Stand Up and Speak Out!

**International Day of Peace—September 21, 2007**

September 21, the International Day of Peace, is observed the world over as a day of peace and nonviolence. In recent years it has become an important opportunity for the School Sisters of Notre Dame Family to pray, teach, and act for peace.



Information about the day, including resources and suggested activities are available at [www.gerhardinger.org](http://www.gerhardinger.org). If you are able to do something to mark the day, please let us know. Send pictures and a brief description of your event to [ssndunngo@earthlink.net](mailto:ssndunngo@earthlink.net).

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