

UN's Global Compact by Kitty Parisi CSJP-A

At our 20th General Chapter, we recognized that globalisation works both for and against the common good. I'd like to share with you two UN initiatives that, hopefully, will minimize some of globalisation's negative impact and help to create more equitable human development, as well as an environmentally sustainable global economy.

The UN's Global Compact is a voluntary partnership of multinational business leaders, UN agencies, organized labor, NGOs, and academia.

The goals are:

- ① to combat world poverty;
- ② to protect human rights; and
- ③ to promote peace and sustainable human and environmental development. Over 3,000 businesses from 100 countries are members including the "Global 108" (108 of the Financial Times global 500 firms). The latter alone employ 10 million workers and are worth US \$5 trillion/£2.5 trillion. Members meet regularly to learn best practices and ways to be more responsible and accountable global citizens. All the members have volunteered to mainstream the following ten universal principles into their day-to-day business operations:
- ① to support and respect internationally proclaimed human rights
- ② to make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses
- ③ to uphold freedom of association and right to collective bargaining
- ④ to eliminate all forms of forced and compulsory labor
- ⑤ to abolish child labor
- ⑥ to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation



- ⑦ to support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges
- ⑧ to undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
- ⑨ to encourage development of environmentally friendly technologies
- ⑩ to work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Human trafficking is one of the many vital areas these principles help to address. With globalisation's open borders, this modern-day slavery has become a world epidemic and booming "big business" worth \$32 billion/£16 billion. The NGO, Free the Slaves, estimates that at any given time, there are about 27 million trafficking victims. The UN's Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking was launched in London on March 26th to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the British Empire's slave trade.



Events are now being held around the world to culminate in an International Conference against Human Trafficking to be held in Vienna from November 27-29, 2007.

The goals of this Global Initiative are:

- /// to raise the public's awareness of trafficking throughout the world
- /// to inform potential victims of the dangers of trafficking
- /// to reduce demand for services and products that rely on slave labor
- /// to protect victims, and
- /// to coordinate and improve law enforcement methods.

 (www.unodc.org)

Please pray for the success of these two important initiatives which are intended to protect the common good and to create more just, peaceful and sustainable human and environmental development.



The United Nations & Global Warming by Suzanne Golas CSJP



The United Nations was founded sixty-two years ago in the aftermath of World War II. The great hope underlying the birth of the UN was that this international organization would be able to intervene in conflicts between nations and thus avoid the horrors that had been experienced in two world wars. It became obvious that the causes of conflict, including poverty, violation of human rights, racial and cultural divides and the arms race, would have to be addressed.

In more recent years, environmental degradation has been recognized as an increasing cause of conflict. In the past few months the issue of climate change has emerged as a priority concern at the United Nations. It has become clear that global warming, its effects on land, water and weather, and its dire consequences for eco-systems is a major concern of the 21st century.

In a recent address, the new Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, stated, "Today, war continues to threaten countless men, women and children... It is the source of untold suffering and loss. The majority of the UN's work still focuses on preventing and ending conflict. But the danger posed by war to all of humanity – and to our planet – is at least matched by the climate crisis and global warming."

Signs of increasing involvement of the United Nations in confronting this crisis include the following:

- ◆ Objective and reputable research on climate change is being presented by UN scientific bodies. The world took great notice in February when the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported that,

indeed, human activity was playing a major role in the acceleration of global warming. If the present rate of emissions of CO₂ is not reduced, worldwide temperatures will rise between 2.5 to 10.4 Fahrenheit degrees by 2100, resulting in extreme weather conditions, the undermining of food and water resources and increased threats to human health. Furthermore, the report said that climate change will hit the world's poorest populations the hardest.

- ◆ For the first time in the UN Security Council an environment issue, global warming, was introduced as a threat to security and peace. While the United States and China disagreed that the issue should be an agenda item for the Security Council, it is obvious that the majority of nations are acknowledging global warming as a threat to not only their own national security, but the peace and security of the planet itself.

- ◆ One of the first acts of the new Secretary General was to appoint three high level special envoys whose job is to prod world leaders to act on cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

- ◆ The annual NGO Conference (which will be attended by CSJPs from the three Provinces as a key part of the Congregation UN program) has as its theme, "Climate Change: How It Impacts Us All." Over 2,000 NGOs from throughout the world will gather to discuss global warming and its effects.

The words of the Secretary General highlight the urgency that is increasingly experienced at the UN: "I believe the world has reached a critical stage in its efforts to exercise responsible environmental stewardship...

We have to change the way we live and the way we travel and transact business... action on climate change will be one of my top priorities as Secretary General."

