



NAMA Coordinating Center
13105 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, Wisconsin 53122
voice: 262-787-1492 fax: 262-780-5070
www.ssnd.org

For Immediate Release: February 13, 2009

Contact: Julie Gilberto-Brady, SSND Communications Coordinator

708-771-6271

School Sisters of Notre Dame delegation to participate in U.N. Commission on Status of Women

A delegation from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, including students from SSND-sponsored College of Notre Dame of Maryland, will attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March as the CSW addresses the issue of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The annual two-week meeting of the commission, March 2-13 in New York, will be guided by two reports of the U.N. Secretary General, which discuss key issues in the sharing of responsibilities between women and men, suggest policy recommendations and provide an overview of current efforts related to the sharing of responsibilities at national level.

“Unequal distribution of responsibility and labor can have devastating effects on women and girls, limiting their opportunities for education and training, threatening their health and exacerbating poverty,” said Sister Ann Scholz, SSND, director of the SSND UN-NGO office. “Too many girls and young women are expected to balance domestic and educational responsibilities. As a result, many fail to realize their potential and their life dreams.”

The agenda will include roundtables focusing on experiences, lessons learned and good practices; interactive expert panels to identify key policy initiatives, and parallel events organized by member states.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year, representatives of member states gather at the United Nations Headquarters to evaluate progress on gender equality, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

As educators with a world vision, School Sisters of Notre Dame are especially sensitive to the needs of women, children and those who live in poverty as they strive to create a global community where human dignity is respected, the environment is treasured, spirituality is nourished, and justice is practiced.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has been a registered NGO (non-governmental organization) with the U.N.’s Department of Public Information since 1993. In 1998, SSND received special consultative status with the ECOSOC. School Sisters of Notre Dame actively participate in the work of the United Nations by presenting

written and oral testimony to ECOSOC and its commissions, particularly on issues related to the welfare and education of girls and women, economic justice, and social development.

SSND delegates to CSW 53 will be working with other NGO representatives to remind government delegates of their responsibility to girls and offering additions and revisions to the draft recommendations of the CSW, Sister Ann said.

“Our efforts will focus particularly on the promise and potential of girls and the obstacles they face in realizing their potential,” Sister Ann said. “Girls face unique hurdles in achieving full equality and we hope that the CSW will deal with girls’ concerns in a substantive manner and develop recommendations that deal specifically with their needs.”

The School Sisters of Notre Dame also joined 28 other NGOs in submitting a written statement that will be presented to the CSW for consideration. The statement recommends empowering girls through mainstream campaigns to transform attitudes, norms and gender stereotypes; promoting the competence and resilience of girls through education and training; providing resources and funding for gender equality and empowerment of girls, and identifying and addressing the needs of girls heading households and children without parental care.

In addition to Sister Ann, who is from the St. Louis Province, the SSND delegation includes Sisters Eileen Reilly, SSND, director of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) for the Atlantic-Midwest Province; Ethel Howley, SSND, assistant JPIC director for the Atlantic-Midwest Province; Joan Connelly, SSND, pastoral associate at Holy Trinity, Westfield, N.J.; Maureen Fleming, SSND, pastoral minister at St. Luke, Westport, Conn., and Carolyn Jost, SSND, vocation director. Julie Gilberto-Brady, communications coordinator for the SSND North American Major Area, also will be attending.

The College of Notre Dame of Maryland participants include Sisters Miriam Jansen, SSND, from the St. Louis Province and director of the college’s international programs, and Sharon Kanis, SSND, associate professor of religious studies. Notre Dame student participants include Barbara Bailey, Ashley Chesson, Jin Young Kim, Kelela Marcos, Madeline Martin-Seaver, Jessica Rohaly and Micah Yousefi. Catherine Kustus, development and communications assistant at Northwestern University’s Sheil Catholic Center in Evanston, Ill., also is attending.

The congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is an international community of women religious. The Sisters educate with a world vision believing that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. The sisters and their colleagues seek to empower women, youth and persons who are poor or marginalized and strive to change systems of poverty and injustice. More than 3,700 SSNDs minister in 36 countries.

###

Additional information about the CSW is available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm>

For more information about the School Sisters of Notre Dame, please visit <http://www.gerhardinger.org/english/index.htm> or <http://www.ssnd.org/>.

For a comprehensive archive of SSND involvement in last year’s 52nd Session of the CSW, please visit http://www.ssnd.org/External/News&Events/CSW2008/csw_index2008.html