

2. The name of the person who signs and his/her role in the organization
3. Whether your organization has ECOSOC status.

*Rome, 24.04.08*

## Education

11. Information alone will not bring about the paradigm shift needed if the climate change challenge is to be successfully tackled. Both farmers and consumers need to be educated to value nature's intrinsic worth as a gift of God, rather than to consider her a 'resource to be exploited'. Special attention should be paid to the information and education of women as they are not only responsible for household nutrition, management of local ecosystems but are also the following generation's teachers. Informed consumer choices towards small-scale farming and local food production need to be part of the solution. Educational syllabuses at every level, but particularly for youth, must include teachings on values that promote a simple lifestyle and on principles of sustainability, particularly on how the human economy is absolutely dependent on nature's economy.

## Policies: Coherence and Implementation

12. We call for more coherence between international UN and non-UN bodies and the cross-cutting implementation of Human Rights. Enacting Conventions to defend and promote human rights, particularly of the poor, reverential and respectful of the carrying capacity of the Earth, is insufficient in itself. International bodies must ensure that appropriate additional protocols are signed and implemented within national laws and policies. International monitoring should guarantee that these laws are applied.

## Civil Society Participation

13. We call on this Conference to launch an effective, long-term multi-stakeholder process of discussion and action, at national, regional and international levels in which civil society, including faith organizations, will play a full role. We are concerned that the voice of 'civil society', especially the most important stakeholders, does not appear to have been sufficiently engaged in the run-up to this conference. We are aware of a recent letter from the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) to the Director General of the FAO, stating that the FAO was disregarding its own experience of interaction with civil society organizations acquired over the past 15 years. For future conferences and their resulting actions, we respectfully petition full consultation regarding the design of the programme and participation by civil society.

If your Group is willing to sign this Statement please send an email to: [cingorome@gmail.com](mailto:cingorome@gmail.com) before May 14, 2008 with the following details:

*Please indicate the following:*

1. The name of your group/NGO

developing countries. Access to property rights, to water and energy services, financing and micro-credits are fundamental to guarantee the existence of small farmers, especially women.

We cannot accept proposals involving the eventual removal of at least one billion small farmers in developing countries to towns, leaving future food production predominantly in the hands of large agro-industrial enterprises. We reiterate our deepest conviction that policies to overcome climate change and hunger must respect and promote the well-being of the rural family and especially of women and recognise rural people's irreplaceable role in the conservation of soil and rural ecosystems, species and related traditional knowledge.

We urge the full implementation of gender-equitable policies as a cross-cutting commitment, since in most developing countries women are the guarantors of food security. Gender-sensitive policies must also be implemented in international long-term and emergency humanitarian (food) aid.

## Biofuels

8. We support the United Nations Secretary-General's on-going review of the sustainability aspects of biofuels production. Rather than searching to replenish diminishing fossil fuel energy supplies at all costs, efforts need to go into restructuring our society to use less energy and resources, an approach equally applicable to food production techniques.

## Transport

9. As an alternative to large-scale biofuels development, we advise visionary policies to reduce transport demand, as well as to shift freight/passenger traffic to non-fossil fuel based systems. FAO needs to continue to examine the economic, social and environmental impacts of 1st and 2nd generation biofuels. The negative implications of large-scale biofuels production on food security and biodiversity give rise to deep concern.

## Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

10. We advise caution against 'short-term' solutions. A clear focus, respecting the integrity of creation, must be kept on eliminating poverty and unjust social structures, the root causes of hunger, through a multiple options approach. We encourage a model of sustainable agriculture and rural development; raising public awareness of the importance of family agriculture; studying the impact of biofuels on the environment; raising concern on extractive industries and their indiscriminate and wasteful use of resources with a high negative impact on environmental and local conditions. In this context, we note with great interest many of the recommendations and analyses of the recently published International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development and share in the general welcome extended to it by civil society organisations.

to be effectively tackled, thus ensuring the availability of sufficient sustainably grown food for everyone's basic needs into the future – a future where the continuing impact of climate change on agro-ecosystems will present an unprecedented and enduring long-term challenge. We share the concerns of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in his call to implement the human right to food and we agree that only a 'normative approach' can gradually eliminate hunger.

## Climate Change

5. The undersigned strongly endorse the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) IV Assessment Report, notably that climate change is predominantly human-induced, principally caused by the unsustainable consumption patterns of wealthy countries, now ever more extensively imitated by upper income groups across the developing world.

## Transgenics

6. Local communities must be fully involved in choices and decisions regarding fishing, food and land policies. We advocate the full mobilization of traditional knowledge systems, combined with insights of modern science, and a fully precautionary approach to transgenic plant and animal breeding techniques in order to safeguard the integrity of creation, and the wellbeing of present and future generations of the human family. There is a moral imperative to feed the hungry, but none to use transgenic biotechnology when less contested and well-tested alternatives can deliver comparable results in the medium and long-term. All that is technically possible is not necessarily good for the person or society. Under no circumstances should patents as they have been addressed in the agreement on 'Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights' (TRIPS) restrict farmers' free exchange of seeds and hinder their innovations. Plants, seeds and genes are part of creation which cannot be claimed by intellectual property rights.

## Right to Food, Empowerment of local communities and of Women

7. We support proactive approaches inspired by 'food sovereignty' and the 'primary right to food', a questioning of the current conventional or mainstream agriculture, empowering developing country small farmers, and encouraging local and regional markets, with a greater focus on bioregions. The FAO can greatly enhance its work in bringing traditional and scientific knowledge together in the face of new challenges posed by climate change. This conference can outline the sustainable strategies needed to create a 'new paradigm' which would build on the ideas advocated by NGOs and civil society in recent decades to deliver sustainable food security rooted in fulfilling the potential of small farmers in

STATEMENT BY CHRISTIAN INSPIRED AND OTHER FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TO "THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY"

*Rome 3-5 June 2008*

Foreword

1. In the light of climate change, concern about future energy supplies, an unprecedented rise in the price of cereals, and the ensuing food riots in several parts of the world, the 'signs of the times' indicate the need for the international community to act with urgency.

Every faith tradition invites us both to feed the hungry and care for our environment and its myriad life forms. As people of faith, we recognize the moral imperative without exception to change our lifestyle in keeping with the carrying capacity of the earth and the protection of its climate. We also recognize the need to ensure that policies enacted by elected representatives and relevant international organizations contribute to an improved quality of life for every human person, each made in the image and likeness of God, and to the sustainability of ecosystems on which every living creature depends.

We believe that the challenges to be addressed at this conference present a huge opportunity to build a new human society, rooted in our loving reverence for and responsible stewardship of all Creation.

Human Rights

2. The undersigned are encouraged by the recent and timely request by the UN Human Rights Council (March 26, 2008) to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct a consultative study on the relationship between climate change and human rights.

3. We share the growing widespread concern that the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to reduce the number of people suffering from hunger by half will not be met. With rising costs of staple cereals and increasing world hunger, orientations from the 'High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenge of Climate Change and Bioenergy' will be more important and more scrutinized than ever.

4. The International Community and, particularly, those suffering the consequences of food shortages, will not only want to see greater solidarity through programmes to alleviate the immediate effects of hunger, but will be anxious for the underlying causes (an unfair world trade system, social and environmental problems caused by the 'green revolution', climate change, unsustainable farming practices, agro-fuel policies, speculation, waste, etc.)

practising the rite of "taking the habit" in admitting new candidates, who in turn, must not use a habit, under the responsibility of the respective Councils and Ministers. It insists, furthermore, that each National Council of the constituted fraternities is responsible for ascertaining that the distinctive sign established by their National Statutes is respected and that each of the provisional National Councils are respectful of the decision taken in the Chapter. The above mentioned sign must be in harmony with the secularity of the SFO." (Circular 41-02/08, dated May 28, 2006)

For more information on this subject, please consult the CIOFS website at <http://www.ciofs.org/circ/pva6en41.html>.<http://www.ciofs.org/circ/pva6en41.html>.

Prepared by  
Doug Clorey  
Presidency Councillor

May 2008

## What about the wearing of a "habit" by Secular Franciscans?

In Circular 41-02/08, the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO) was provided with guidance and direction regarding the wearing of a habit by Secular Franciscans.

In the opinion of the Juridical Commission, Secular Franciscans were reminded that their apostolate is the personal witness that they offer to the society in which they live - in their families, in their workplaces, in their local communities and in the Church. This witness must be recognized by others through the way in which they live and love each other as brothers and sisters ("see how they love one another"). It is this witness that is to be the "sign" of the Secular Franciscan presence in the world, not any habit, dress or uniform. The Juridical Commission also reminded Secular Franciscans that a "habit" is the sign of the religious friar, not the secular. The SFO General Constitutions further remind us that "The secular state characterizes our spirituality and our apostolic life and is expressed according to our respective conditions; that is, contributing to building up the Kingdom of God by our presence in life-situations and in temporal activities" (CC. GG. 3,1-2).

With respect to wearing a habit within the Secular Franciscan Order, the opinion of the Juridical Commission is clear. Local fraternities of the SFO must not use a habit as part of their fraternal way of life and should not practise the rite of "taking the habit" in admitting new candidates. Rare exceptions to this direction is provided for fraternities who have been in existence for hundreds of years (ie. "ancient" fraternities) and whose fraternal life has included the wearing of a habit as part of their fraternal way of life, based on their spiritual and cultural history. Permission to wear a habit is provided in these circumstances as a rare exception based on a long history and tradition. However, this exception is not intended to imply that, if some fraternities wished to go back to the days when habits were permitted, other exceptions could be granted. As a general rule, the wearing of a habit by Secular Franciscans is not permitted.

In addressing this subject, reference should be made to the SFO Rule (Article 23) which states that "... the distinctive Franciscan sign (is) regulated by the statutes." The General Constitutions (Article 43) further state that "The national statutes establish ... the distinctive sign of membership in the Order (the "Tau" or other Franciscan symbol)." And, in most countries, National Statutes specify that the distinctive sign for Secular Franciscan is a form of the Tau cross. It is also important to note that all Secular Franciscans within a nation fall under the jurisdiction of the National Fraternity of that nation, irrespective of the Province of friars who established the fraternity and are bound by the provisions of their respective National Statutes.

"The Juridical Commission of the CIOFS Presidency is of the opinion that, in obedience to the Rule, the Constitutions and the Ritual, local Fraternities of the SFO cannot continue

## CANADIAN SECULAR FRANCISCAN CELEBRATES HER 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, members of the Secular Franciscan Order joined family and friends to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Mabel Bennett, sfo. The event was marked with the celebration of the Eucharist at St. Veronica's Church in Dorval, Quebec, Canada. The presider was Fr. Clarence LaPlante, ofm, former National Spiritual Assistant of Canada.

In his homily, Fr. Clarence reminded everyone that life is God's most precious gift. "Mabel received new life as part of God's family in baptism and, for 100 years, she has remained faithful to that life". This celebration also marked Mabel's profession in the Secular Franciscan Order for over 70 years. Members of her local fraternity, Immaculate Conception Fraternity in Montreal, recognized her outstanding contribution and acknowledged her as a pillar of their fraternity. No responsibility was too simple or too small; she accepted whatever duty was assigned to her with cheerfulness and generosity. Her attitude bears a striking resemblance to that of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of the Secular Franciscan Order, whose motto was "Give to the Lord what you have with joy and cheerfulness". Mabel also served on her fraternity council for too many years to count. She always made herself available to meet the needs of her fraternity and those whom it served.

For many years, Mabel managed "The Little Franciscan Shop" providing resources to meet the needs of Secular Franciscans in the Montreal area, as well as throughout Eastern Canada. She was an astute business woman and endeared herself to people as she joyously responded to any and all requests. She retired from this work three years ago at the age of 97!

In reflecting on all that Mabel has contributed and accomplished, one cannot help but marvel at how beautiful a life can be when it is touched by faith, unswerving service and kindness. Mabel is a true Secular Franciscan in both spirit and deed. As Encarnación del Pozo, General Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order, indicated in a letter addressed to Mabel, "Your inspiring example of fidelity and generosity over these many years is a source of great joy for the entire Order ... Sister, I would also like to thank the Lord for your 100 years of life and for the gift of your Franciscan and secular vocation. As we say in Spain (my country): '¡Que Dios te bendiga y que cumplas muchos más!' (May the Lord bless you and many happy returns!)". The entire Secular Franciscan Order, world-wide, rejoices with Mabel and extends loving best wishes and the assurance of continued prayers, admiration and affection.

Contributed by Tom Wilkinson, Regional Minister, Eastern Canada

the next six years, and of electing a new Presidency Council who will guide the International Fraternity for the next six years. Let us pray with one voice within the National Fraternity of Canada that the Spirit of God will bless the Secular Franciscan Order during its upcoming General Chapter.

Most High Glorious God, we praise You for Your presence in the world and for the tremendous gift of our Franciscan vocation. We beseech You to inspire every brother and sister of the Secular Franciscan Order as we prepare for the upcoming General Chapter in Hungary. Grant the necessary wisdom to our brothers and sisters who will take part in the Chapter to develop the priorities for the Order for the next six years and to elect those You want to lead and animate us. Guide and direct us so that we may follow the Gospel and our Rule more closely and be co-workers with You in the rebuilding of the Church and the World. We ask this through Christ our Lord and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis, St. Clare, and our holy patrons, St. Elizabeth and St. Louis. Amen.

Prepared by  
Doug Clorey  
Presidency Councillor  
English-Speaking Nations, Europe and North America

## General Chapter in Hungary

From November 15 to 22, 2008, the Secular Franciscan Order will celebrate its twelfth General Chapter in Hungary. This Chapter will be an elective chapter and will conclude the two-year period designated to mark the 8<sup>th</sup> Centenary of the birth of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The central theme of the Chapter will be on the profession of Secular Franciscans and their sense of belonging to the Secular Franciscan Order.

During the past two years, Secular Franciscans have been invited to deepen their knowledge of St. Elizabeth and to reflect on the roots of the Secular Franciscan Order and, more specifically, on their vocation as Secular Franciscans. The General Chapter will continue this reflection on St. Elizabeth who dedicated her life to serving the poor and who is recognized as the patroness of the Third Order, Secular and Regular. Elizabeth had a profound confidence in God's will and was able to see it in the events of her life; her example should stimulate Secular Franciscans to recognize God's plan in the events of their own lives, a plan that is full of love, even during times of difficulty and suffering. Today, Elizabeth continues to challenge us to reflect on our state in life, married or single, on our family life, on our professional work and on our social engagements, so that we may follow a path that leads to Christian perfection by adhering obediently to our vocational call. The life of our holy patroness and her Franciscan spirit provides an inspiring example for us to imitate. Elizabeth invites us, by living our secular and Franciscan identity, to offer our lives in response to the signs of our time, with a continuous spirit of conversion and moved to give an active response to the requirements of our Rule (4) to "go from Gospel to life and from life to Gospel".

When the Secular Franciscan Order assembles in a General Chapter, it will represent a body composed of some 430,000 professed Secular Franciscans, present in over 100 countries world-wide, and also including over 50,000 Franciscan Youth. In Chapter, representatives of the Secular Franciscan Order from around the world will reflect on the manner in which Secular Franciscans can accomplish, in time and in history, the mission that the San Damiano Crucifix entrusted to St. Francis to "Go and rebuild my Church". At the heart of accomplishing this mission will be the development, in every part of the world, of a deep sense of belonging and a living awareness of the grace of profession that has made us Franciscan, fully realizing our Baptismal vocation and introducing us into the body of the Secular Franciscan Order and of the entire Franciscan Family. This is also a time when all Secular Franciscans are invited to reflect on these themes. How does our profession and sense of belonging to the Order, surpassing boundaries of states, of languages, or social classes and of cultures, engage us into a unified body for the spreading of the Gospel and the rebuilding of the Church and of the world?

During the General Chapter, capitulars will have the opportunity of reviewing the work that the Presidency Council has undertaken during the past six years, of developing priorities for

*To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Those who are praying with you and sending you this passionate appeal to embrace without fear and reservation our Franciscan vocation to be instruments of peace are

Br. Isidor Peterhans, OFM Cap, Chairperson FFA-Kenya  
Br. Sebastian Unsner, OFM, Provincial Minister  
Br. Gianfrancesco Sisto OFM, director JPIC Franciscans Africa.  
Sr. Mary Frances, board member of JPIC Franciscan Africa  
Br. Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap, director Damietta Peace Initiative Kenya

Support messages may be sent out to the following address belonging to GPIC African Franciscan Family at Nairobi : [jpica@gmail.com](mailto:jpica@gmail.com)

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[1] *Testament* 23; *Mirror of Perfection*, 26.

[2] *1 Thes* 5:5

[3] *Mt* 5:45

[4] *Mt* 5:9

[5] *Testament* 34.

[6] *Anonymous of Perugia* VIII, 38.

[7] Cfr. *Canticle of Brother Sun*, 10-11.

and of our words of encouragement; to overcome tribal barriers and fuelled differences that are the Trojan horse ridden by all those who put greed and power before people's lives.

Let us take no side, but the side of Christ. Let's not be drawn into the present escalation of political and social tensions. We need to stand for justice and truth, but without advocating in any way violent means. Such violent means are not only machetes and guns, but also thoughts of revenge and hateful remarks, inflammatory talks and one-sided accusations.

LIFE and PEACE are supreme goods that cannot be sacrificed on any kind of individualistic altar!

Dear sisters and brothers of our Franciscan families in Kenya, and especially dear ministers and superiors of our Franciscan communities, the Lord puts us to the test today. The present situation calls upon us to make our common vocation as builders of peace a lived reality. Let us support each other; let us be without fear; let us address tensions among ourselves, and seek answers in our common Franciscan ideals and commitments.

Most of our communities are made up of sisters and brothers of different origins, different political and ethnic allegiances. These differences need not to divide us. We have found in Christ the one who breaks down the barriers of our differences.

We are members of the one body of Christ. We cannot restore the health of this body by throwing away some of the members, but only by taking care of the wounded ones. Maybe such wounded and hurting members are among ourselves. In such cases let us passionately reach out to each other and offer help, encouragement and healing.

In this way we can all, individually and in our communities, pray with renewed conviction and sincerity, not by words only but by deeds, and by our very lives in our Franciscan families:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, Joy.*

*O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;*

# Franciscan Family Association Kenya

Nairobi, Feast of the Name of Jesus, January 3, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Franciscan Family in Kenya, we greet you with the words the Lord revealed to St. Francis:

"May the Lord give you Peace!"<sup>[1]</sup>

In this way St. Francis liked to address the people wherever he met them. In this way he wished to witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. With these words we wish to greet you at the beginning of this new year 2008. But it is not so much the beginning of the new year that makes us to write to you; it is the present situation in our country of Kenya.

Prompted by the escalating acts of violence, looting, displacement of people, loss of properties and death toll taking place in our country following the elections, we want to reach all of you with an embrace of *Shalom* and with this message of peace.

The disrupting and evil forces at work in this present time have the enormous power to split our communities, our souls and our hearts. Tensions are felt everywhere, and fears are growing that what we are experiencing now might be the beginning of more bloodshed and the spreading of hatred and the recourse to revenge.

A great challenge is placed before us. A challenge that calls us to live as "children of light"<sup>[2]</sup> and of the common Father who loves all with the same love and makes his sun shine on all.<sup>[3]</sup>

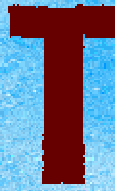
This, more than ever, is the time to live out our Christian vocation and Franciscan charism to be instruments of peace, builders of bridges of communion, creators of life and not death. "Blessed are those who work for peace; God will call them his children."<sup>[4]</sup>

Brothers and Sisters, let us not allow another cruel page of history, like that of Rwanda, be written into the book of our country!

Let's do whatever is in our capacity to preserve unity in our communities and with the people around us.

Let us all, members of the Franciscan Family in Kenya, leave behind the path of aggression and violence and open a way forward that calls for relationship and peacemaking.

St Francis who embraced the "leper" and visited the "sultan", teaches us to put aside resentments and stereotypes in order to reach out our brothers and sisters in need of our help



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