



For Immediate Release: February 21, 2013

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School Sisters of Notre Dame delegation to participate in UN Commission on Status of Women

A delegation from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, including students from SSND-sponsored Notre Dame of Maryland University, will attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting next month in New York as the CSW addresses the “elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.”

During the annual two-week meeting of the commission, March 4-15, the CSW also will evaluate the outcomes of its session in 2009, which addressed the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS. Member states, as well as representatives of United Nations entities and of non-governmental organizations such as the School Sisters of Notre Dame, will participate in the session.

This year’s issue is especially relevant to the School Sisters of Notre Dame because ending violence against women and girls is key to the mission of School Sisters of Notre Dame, said Sister Eileen Reilly, SSND, director of the SSND UN-NGO office.

“We have always worked to help women and girls achieve their full potential,” Sister Eileen said. “Violence in any form is such an obstacle for women and girls, and since the aftermath of violence can last a lifetime, our best hope is to focus on prevention.”

The congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame also has joined with 23 other NGOs in submitting a written statement to the CSW, urging member to criminalize offenses and close gaps in law enforcement; provide resources and funding for gender equality and girls’ empowerment; promote participation, visibility and empowerment of girls; collect, analyze and disseminate data on girls; and ensure access to education and schooling as a human rights imperative.

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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.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has been a registered NGO (non-governmental organization) with the U.N. Department of Public Information since 1993. In 1998, SSND received special consultative status with the ECOSOC.

In addition to Sister Eileen, the SSND delegation includes Sister Arlene Flaherty, OP, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation director for the SSND Atlantic-Midwest Province; Julie Gilberto-Brady, SSND communications coordinator; and Denise Hyland, a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDM) faculty participants include Sister Sharon Kanis, SSND, professor of religious studies; Natalie Gillard, director of student activities; and Mary Packard, associate professor/chair of nursing. The NDM student participants include Queenstar Arkong, Ghana; Machan Bowman, Baltimore; Kelly Coons, Salisbury, Md.; Rachel De la Haya, San Antonio; Marie Diop, Dakar, Senegal; Ruth Djarbeng, Accra, Ghana; Celeste Holmes-Tate, Baltimore; Raven Proctor, Maryland; Chandler Ramey, Essex, Md.; and Jussara Santos, Brazil.

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 3,000 SSNDs minister in 34 countries.

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Additional information about the CSW is available at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm>

For more information about the School Sisters of Notre Dame, please visit:

www.gerhardinger.org or www.ssnd.org

Follow daily coverage of SSNDs at the CSW (March 4-15): <http://www.ssnd.org/un-csw-2013>