

**Proposal
Submitted to
Members of the 1977 General Chapter
The Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Regarding
UNITED NATIONS AFFILIATION**

Submitted by
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September 28, 1977

PROPOSAL:

To maximize the internationality of the Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame;

To promote global awareness among its members;

To facilitate efforts in behalf of global justice and peace;

To provide an opportunity for ecumenical collaboration;

Be it proposed that:

The Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame seek Non Governmental Organization status with the United Nations Organization.

BACKGROUND:

Pope John XXIII urged that people everywhere be attuned to the United Nations in its efforts to build peace and promote economic and social development.

The United Nations Organization has as its essential purpose the maintenance and consolidation of peace between peoples, fostering between them friendly relations, based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, and varied forms of cooperation in every sector of human endeavor.

It is therefore our ardent desire that the United Nations Organization – in its structure and in its means – may become ever more equal to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks. And may the time come as quickly as possible when every human being will find therein an effective safeguard for the rights which derive directly from his dignity as a person, and which are therefore universal, inviolable, and inalienable rights.

Once again, We exhort Our children to take an active part in public life, and to contribute towards the attainment of the common good of the entire human family...

Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*

In 1971, the world's Bishops, in their Synodal (sic) statement, urged United Nations support especially in its peace-keeping role.

The United Nations, which because of its unique purpose should promote participation by all nations, and all international organizations, should be supported insofar as they are the beginning of a system capable of restraining the armaments race...

Justice in the World

Non Governmental Organization status at the United Nations would offer a unique witness of Christian concern for the global community. Any voluntary grouping of private individuals or of associations that have a common ideal and objective and have organized themselves nationally and internationally for their promotion through exchange of ideas and information and for common actions, can qualify as a Non Governmental Organization. Trade unions, religious and confessional groups, youth movements, industrial groups, social welfare agencies, associations of cooperation, veterans' organizations frequently qualify.

Each organization must desire to cooperate with the United Nations and must be willing to promote the ideals set forth in the UN Charter, namely, peace, economic and social development of all peoples, human rights.

Non Governmental Organization status with the United Nations can be attained in one of the following ways:

- I. In association with the UN Office of Public Information (OPI)
See attached letter from Sally Swing Shellely and copy of UN document, 77-42819. As its name implies, this status provides an opportunity for obtaining and disseminating information about the UN. This status is easiest to obtain. Several religious congregations, Maryknoll Fathers, Maryknoll Sisters, Congregation of Notre Dame are affiliated in this manner. The U.S. Leadership Conference of Women Religious is also affiliated with OPI.
- II. In Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council
See attached letter from Lola Costa and the copy of ECOSOC Resolution 1296. NGO status with ECOSOC implies a working relationship with the Economic and Social Council, one of the main organs of the UN. By this status, SSND could submit studies and recommendations to ECOSOC regarding international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, human rights and religious matters. This status also enables representation at international conferences regarding ECOSOC related matters: World Food Conference, Habitat, Law of the Sea, etc. Affiliation with the UN Office of Public Information is automatic, if any organization receives consultative status with ECOSOC.

NOTE: Consultative status with ECOSOC is more difficult to obtain than association with the UN Office of Public Information. This status acquisition takes at least two years. The next meeting of the ECOSOC Committee on Non Governmental Organization is scheduled for early in 1979. The deadline for submission is June, 1978.

- III. In Consultative Status with one of the UN Specialized Agencies
In the case of SSND, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, would be most appropriate. If consultative status would be obtained with a specialized agency such as UNESCO, consultative status with ECOSOC is easily attained.

Documentation on NGO status with UNESCO can be obtained from: Mr. Amerding, NGO Section, UNESCO, CPS, 1 Rue Miollis, Paris 15 eme, France

Note: This proposal and background information has been prepared by Sister Mary Beth Reissen, SSND. She is a Non Governmental Organization Representative for Pax Christi International Catholic Peace Movement at the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference. She has had experience in collaborating with members of other churches in her UN work. Prior to preparing this proposal she consulted with Marjorie Keenan, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary and member of the Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission, and Rev. James Niecharz, MM, Member of the Holy See Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly.