

II. PROGRESS REPORT: August 1, 1979

Non-Governmental Organization Status in the United Nations.

- I. Background from the General Chapter of 1977
 - A. Proposal from Sister Mary Beth Reissen

“Be it proposed that the Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame seek Non-Governmental Organization status with the United Nations Organization.”
 - B. Listing of Ways of Attaining NGO Status with the UN
 1. In association with the UN Office of Public Information (OPI)
 2. In Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
 3. 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.
 - C. General Chapter Decision

The General Chapter recommended that the General Superior and her Councilors study Nongovernmental Organization Status of the United Nations with a view to seeking such status for the Congregation.
- II. Implementation of General Chapter Decision
 - A. The General Council decided to name three Sisters in America and three in Germany to study the question of NGO status in the UN.
 1. Members in the United States:
 - Sister Ruth Marie May
 - Sister Patricia Flynn
 - Sister Mary Beth Reissen
 2. Members in Germany
 - Sister M. Johanna Hellmeier
 - Sister M. Columba Laskowski
 - Sister M. Dolorata Schaffer
 - B. Two General Councilors, Sisters M. Godharda and Wonda, were named as liaison persons for the study committee.
 - C. Directions Given to the Study Committee

“...to do as much research as is possible or necessary concerning Nongovernmental Organization status in the United Nations, including inquiries into Religious Congregations and other organizations that already hold such status. By April 19, 1979, ... to have a written report from each group on their research with a clear listing of favorable and unfavorable aspects of seeking and holding NGO status.”
 - D. Change in Time-line

Because it was too difficult to obtain all the information in such a short time, the General Council decided that a progress report would suffice for the April deadline.

III. Committee Reports

A. Members in Germany

The work required of the European members of the committee an intense study of the relevant literature. (books, magazines, articles)

At the same time they tried to obtain written and oral contact with persons and organizations that already attained nongovernmental status or who could give advice. The following names were given in the report.

Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, New York. His answer contained the Resolution 1296 on the possibility of attaining NGO status with ECOSOC and a questionnaire for those interested.

Mr. Ammerding, Paris, NGO section of UNESCO The Community of Christian Life in Germany, who already have NGO membership

The Center of UNICEF in Germany

A member of parliament, Liselotte Pieser, on the question of the functioning of NGO's.

Mr. Fred Martinache, Secretary General of ICO in Geneva.

Mr. Larnaud, Paris of the international office for UNESCO

Mr. Descamps in the international office for Education and Instruction, connected to NGO's for UNESCO and UNICEF.

Ms Ursula Mannle, a professor of political science.

B. Members in America

Because the author of the proposal, Sister Mary Beth, had already done much background study and had personal experience in an NGO, the American members of the Study Committee were able to proceed to two further steps.

1. A listing of the favorable and unfavorable aspects of acquiring non-governmental status.
2. A Posing of key questions concerning NGO status and a brief answer to each question.

IV. Continuation of the Study

A. Exchange of reports between the German and American members of the Study Committee.

B. Plans of the German Members

It is the opinion of the German group that there is sufficient material available to finish the full report for the next time-line in autumn, including favorable and non-favorable aspects of NGO status in the UN.

C. Plans of the American Members

1. Interviews are planned with representatives of Catholic Non- Governmental Organizations which are in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.
2. Interviews are planned with representatives of the Catholic Non- Governmental Organizations which are affiliated with the Office of Public Information.
3. An interview will be conducted with a representative from the Better World Movement which is seeking to become affiliated with ECOSOC.
4. An investigation can be undertaken as to the Religious Committee of NGO's activities at the UN in the past two years.
5. The possibility for greater spiritual presence through NGO representation can also be explored.

- V. A full composite report will be given at the Extended General Council in 1980, Extended General Council Members are encouraged to become knowledgeable of NGO status in the United Nations.