

## The Claretian Ministry at the United Nations in New York City

- attends open meetings of subjects of particular interest to the Claretian congregation
- attends NGO meetings on these subjects and takes part in discussions that lead to the formation of policies

## United Nations Upcoming Events:

World Conference on Youth, Colombo, Sri Lanka 2014

## Welcome to the new *cmf@un* newsletter

This newsletter is a communications tool for the Claretian advocacy work through and at the United Nations. It is meant to reach out to the worldwide community of the Claretian Congregation and our mission partners and collaborators.

To be published quarterly, the newsletter will disseminate information about the work of the UN and of the Claretians at the UN, with a particular focus on issues that may impact the peoples, areas, and ministries our missionaries are working in—in a word, our Claretian missions. We hope that our missionaries will be able to relate, link, and interact with the global collective efforts to respond to the challenges of today's world.

We welcome your contributions, especially those reflecting your pastoral experiences related to the top-

ics treated in this newsletter and its future editions.

Your comments and feedback will help improve the work of the CMF@UN team as this ministry continues to evolve. So please send us your emails at: [jplicmf@outlook.com](mailto:jplicmf@outlook.com).



Norbert Nagel

# U.N. passes treaty to curb conventional arms trade

The open global arms trade in conventional weapons—everything from ships and planes to pistols and knives—is estimated to be \$40 to \$60 billion a year. There is also a clandestine black market no one knows

how big. Powerful nations are among the most active purveyors of these kinds of weapons, which often are used on people—by governments, terrorists, and criminal syndicates

The General Assembly of the United Nations

on Easter Monday overwhelmingly approved the historic Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). African countries, awash with AK-17s and child soldiers, were especially active, together with human rights organizations, in promoting it over seven years of negotiations. Although it is something less than was originally hoped for, advocates still accept it as a good start.

It takes effect once it is signed by 50 countries, which is likely soon. Some experts—noting the half-hearted fidelity to other international agreements—are somewhat skeptical about the ATT's implementation.

The treaty binds nations to establish guidelines for the trade in conventional weapons, so as to prevent them from going to nations that will use them against their own people or pass them on to terrorist or criminal organizations. Arms shipments are not to be detrimental to women and children. Each year a nation must make a report to show that the weapons are not going to the bad guys.

Three nations prevented the treaty from being approved by consensus or unanimously in the Assembly. They were, perhaps not

surprisingly, Iran, Syria, and North Korea. Twenty-three abstained from the voting, most notably Russia and China, who are big players in the arms trade with pariah nations. The two countries argued that judging other nations was subjective and influenced by the interests of the United States and Western democracies. Other nations share some of that skepticism, even if they approved the treaty. Another sharp difference existed as well over arms to non-state bodies, like the rebels in Syria. Most nations recognize that there is a time people have a right to rebel, and so those groups are not excluded.

The United States—at least the Obama administration—welcomes the treaty. The president will probably sign it and promise to abide by it. But he's not likely to get it ratified by the U.S. Senate. The National Rifle Association, the domestic gun lobby, sees the small arms provisions as a threat to the Second Amendment (the constitutional right to keep and bear arms) of U.S. citizens. The country has abided by U.N. treaties before, even when they were not ratified by the Senate.

That leads to the question: Why be excited about a treaty that will have so many holes? Human rights advocates are nonetheless excited, not just hopeful, because the self-reporting will not be meaningless. Nations will have to go on record that they are not giving guns to terrorists, tyrants, or criminals in international forums.

That kind of reporting has had some positive impact, however mixed, in the area of human rights. While offending nations can and do continue to ignore the rules, reports still impact a nation's reputation in the court of world opinion.

Now, with the passing of the ATT, excessive and unjustifiable arms trading, together with torture, kidnapping, execution, will determine how the world judges a nation on human rights.



Flickr photo cc/AL\_HikesAZ

"Non-Violence" (also known as "The Knotted Gun") by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd at the United Nations, New York.

On April 1, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Arms Trade Treaty. While it is no panacea, human rights advocates welcome the treaty as an important good start.

# New focus for U.N.'s youth work

During its 51st session, February 6–15, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) reviewed the policies and programs involving youth. The commission welcomed the initiative of the government of Sri Lanka to host a world conference on youth in Colombo in 2014. The focus of the conference will be on the participation and involvement of youth in achieving internationally agreed-upon development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The commission wants to make the youth-related work of the United Nations more effective. It encourages member states to develop comprehensive policies and action plans that focus on the best interests of youth, particularly the poor and marginalized, and address all aspects of youth development. It also encourages the international community and the United Nations system to support national youth programs and further develop and improve the existing international framework on youth—including the 15 priorities of the United Nations' "World Programme of Action for Youth."

CSocD reaffirmed that the strengthening of international cooperation regarding youth, capacity-building, the enhancement of dialogue, mutual understanding, and the active participation of young people are crucial elements in helping to eradicate poverty and bring about full employment and social integration. The commission also promotes access to nationally owned social protection and social services as important for empowering young people.

To address the global challenge of youth unemployment, CSocD urges the development and implementation of strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. Included in that should be the development of a global strategy on youth employment that

would build, among other things, on the Global Jobs Pact and the call for action of the International Labor Organization.

The commission encourages member states to collect accurate data and pay attention to the Millennium Development Goals. Youth and youth organizations themselves should be involved in crafting the emerging post-2015 development agenda, and youth representatives should be included at all relevant discussions in the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council (and its functional commissions), and at United Nations conferences.

Such youth representatives should come from various cultural, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. To promote gender equality, women should be empowered in all aspects of youth development. The commission calls upon donors—including member states and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations—to contribute to the United Nations Youth Fund to facilitate the participation of youth representatives from developing countries.

With this information in mind, our Claretian Missionaries throughout the world who are involved in ministry with youth may want to work with their youth organizations to develop strategic plans in their own regions to submit to their governments or other organizations that can help to make these goals a reality. They could also put together suggestions and proposals for the meeting in Sri Lanka in 2014.



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Claretian youth encounter in Chascomús, Argentina.



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## Our mission at the U.N.

The ministry of Claretians at the United Nations was established by the General Government at the request of the General Chapter.

Concern for human rights in Latin America, Africa, and Asia initiated the move. Human rights, then, is the first priority issue of the CMF@UN team.

Because they are often tied to human rights violations and are of grave concern to many of our missionaries, the team also prioritizes the rights of indigenous peoples and the progress on the so-called Millennial Goals for sustainable development of poorer countries.



*(From right:)*  
In April 2012  
Brother Robert  
Omondi, JPIC  
Coordinator;  
and Father  
Miguel Ángel  
Velasco, Gen-  
eral Prefect  
of the Aposto-  
late, met with

The team will also respond to current issues that advance peace, justice, and the integrity of creation. This first issue of our newsletter reflects this in articles on arms control and youth unemployment and development.

Fathers Heherson Balabbo, Eddie De León, and Tom Joyce, and Brother Arnel Alcober (not pictured) of the USA Province to discuss setting up the CMF@UN team.

## Meet the CMF@UN team



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