



SNDdeN@UN

with hearts as wide as the world

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

Making Known God's Goodness

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November- December 2023

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, women with hearts as wide as the world, embrace the people of our world in multiple crises. They continue their advocacy at the United Nations for disadvantaged people struggling to obtain living conditions that respect their human dignity. So, this year ends with a publication focused on the rights of people and the environment.

As the ministry of commitment to improving living conditions is not only the prerogative of sisters, we can all join in, for together we will achieve great things. The articles in this volume are about:

- **Conference Of the Parties (COP28)**
- **Educating young people about climate change**
- **Immigrant Children's Rights**
- **Together, we unite to end violence against women**
- **The 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

OUR COMMON HOME IS ON FIRE



The 28th meeting of the [Conference Of the Parties](#) (COP28), who were signatories of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), took place from November 30 to December 12, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It was held at a time when global temperatures were reaching record levels, and extreme weather phenomena were disrupting people's lives in every corner of the world.

These indicated the urgency of action for decision-makers in the area of climate.

Participating in the conference were the 154 heads of state and governments, who are the decision-makers, along with experts and stakeholders, including representatives of NGOs. Their principal tasks were to assess progress in implementing the 2015 Paris Agreement and to make a statement about how to realize the holding the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Science clearly



documents how we humans continue to put pressure on the planet and our life support system to such an extent that we find ourselves at a critical moment. Negotiators therefore had to bring governments to commit themselves to effective action to assure hope for the peoples of the world.

COP28 engaged in discussions and negotiations on a series of crucial topics, such as:



accelerating the transition to renewable energy and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions before 2030;

addressing effective climate finance for climate action (e.g., establishing a "Loss and Damages Fund" for countries most affected but who have least contributed the least to the problem);

integrating nature and human well-being into climate solutions;

and fostering inclusiveness to ensure that all voices are heard.

photo Credit UN

The U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made a passionate appeal at the opening of the high-level global summit for climate action: "The earth's vital signs are failing . . . Climate justice is long overdue . . . We are miles from the goals of the Paris Agreement – and minutes to midnight for the 1.5-degree limit. . . But it is not too late . . . We can - you can - prevent planetary crash and burn . . ." He challenged the world leaders, "We need leadership, cooperation, and political will for action . . . Make this COP count. Make this COP a game-changer. Make this COP the new hope in the future of humankind." <https://rb.gy/xel0fy>

Outcomes of COP28

On the very first day of the conference, the parties reached an agreement on the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund to be allocated to countries suffering the impact of climate change and on the financing modalities.

After discussion and negotiation, the parties arrived for the first time at the commitment to phase out fossil fuels and adopt renewable energies.

Lingering questions about phasing out of fossil fuels and embracing renewable energy. Where will the resources come from? How will they be made available? Who will buy electric vehicles?

Lingering lack of clear obligation and scale: How can we ensure this commitment will be honored and supported?

YOUTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPERATIVE OF EQUIPPING THEM FOR RESPONSIBLE ENGAGEMENT



By 2030, the planet will have 1.9 billion young people ages 10 to 24, almost 90% of whom will live in developing countries. This generation of young people is particularly exposed to the effects of climate change. It is their future that is at risk. While some of these young people are taking action for the climate, the vast majority living in many parts of the world is completely unaware of the danger facing the world in terms of climate change. Only education and training can transform them into active players and integral parties in the search for solutions.

Climate change is increasingly evident, increasing uncertainty about the very survival of humanity. This planet will be bequeathed to our youth and those who will follow them. They, in turn, will pass it on to the generations that succeed them. As Pope Benedict XVI pointed out, [climate change is an issue of intergenerational justice](#).

Many of the young people who are aware are at the forefront of organizing themselves and raising their voices to assert their right to life. Their actions point out the power of knowledge and solidarity. The unprecedented mobilization of young people around the world demonstrates that they do not want to be victims of climate change. They are impelled by the urgency of the issue and are not waiting for solutions to be found by others who seem to be burying their



Credit photo GreenFaith

heads in the sand. They want to be part of the solution and are mustering all their energies and abilities -- education, technology, science – to raise the alarm about the immediacy of the need for climate action. All of us have the responsibility to ensure that these young people have climate education integrated into their learning program throughout their school career, from nursery school through university. Indeed, intensifying efforts to promote climate justice is essential today. Teacher training, with a focused effort to

reach out to the marginalized, would go a long way to promote a more sustainable lifestyle.

FOR EVERY CHILD, EVERY RIGHT



Credit photo UNICEF

November 20th is International Children's Day, established in 1959 when the U.N. adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This year's theme was: "[Every child has every right.](#)" The NGO Office of the sisters of Notre Dame de Namur at the U.N. highlighted the situation of migrant children. Every year, millions of children leave their country, voluntarily or involuntarily, accompanied or not by

their parents. The reasons why they feel forced to flee their countries range from food insufficiency, climate change, and armed conflicts. According to UNICEF, in today's world, [43.3 million children are displaced](#). Surely, these children dream of finding a better life and living conditions that respect their human dignity. Unfortunately, in most cases, they are treated no better than adults: deprived of protection, rejected, taken into custody, facing danger, discrimination, deprivation, and exclusion. Children have no option. They unknowingly undertake a perilous and uncertain journey, which, in some cases, leads to their deaths.



Credit photo UNICEF

Children without parents are the most vulnerable. They easily fall prey to human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labor, and other forms of abuse.

Laws should protect children from falling victim to these tragic situations. All children, even migrants, and refugees, have an innate right to benefit from protection, whatever their status and/or origin, because they are enshrined in the human rights treaty the Convention on Human Rights of the Child ratified in 1990 by all member-states of the United Nations, with the sole exception of the United States.

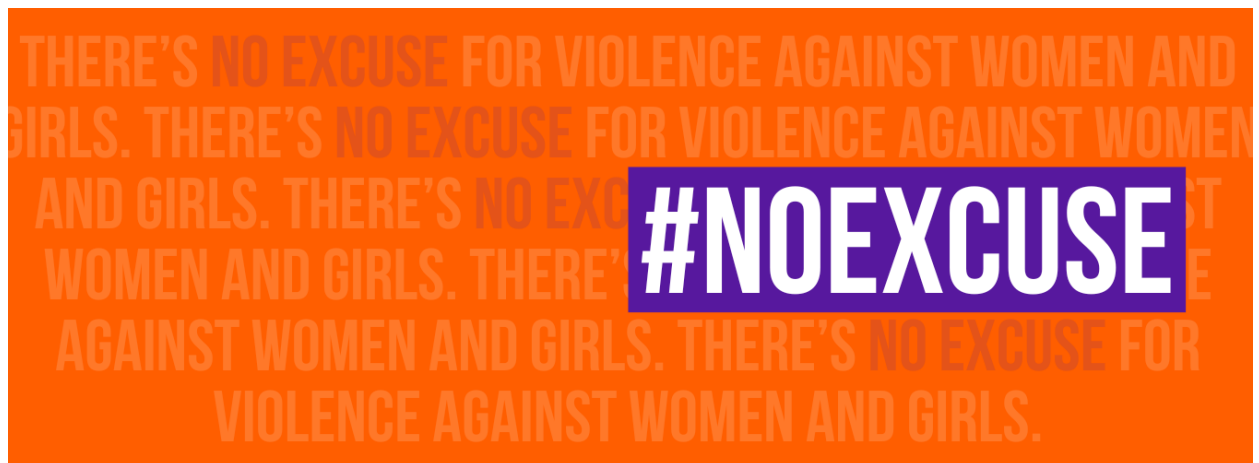
[UNICEF research conducted in 2022](#) showed that the number of displaced children has reached the highest level ever, and even worse, these children do not benefit from any support or services such as healthcare, education, or protection.

Faced with this state of affairs, UNICEF called on governments to take the following actions:

- Provide equal support to all children, no matter from wherever they come;
- recognize refugee, migrant, and displaced children and to see them first as children – with rights to protection, development, and participation;
- increase collective action to ensure effective access to essential services – including health care and education – for all uprooted children and families, regardless of their status

- protect refugee, migrant, and displaced children from discrimination and xenophobia;
 - end harmful border management practices and detention of immigrant children;
 - empower young refugees, migrants, and displaced people to develop their talents and realize their full potential.
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ALL UNITED! INVEST TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



The 2023 day International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was celebrated on November 25. The observance offers an occasion for people all over the globe to raise their voices on behalf of their sister girls and women and to renew their commitment to join with others to prevent violence against women. The day is marked at the U.N. by a range of activities and workshops organized by women and girls in collaboration with the U.N. Women, an initiative within the U.N. system dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Around the world, women continue to suffer various forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, forced marriage, prostitution, and genital mutilation. They are violated not only physically but also psychologically, morally, sexually, and economically. Additionally, with the digitalization of society, a wide range of online violence is presented under many guises. No environment, no country, no generation is spared. One in three women experiences physical or sexual violence at least once in her life.

This year's theme, "[All united, invest to end violence against women and girls](#)" was a call to governments, civil society, women's organizations, youth, the private sector, the media and the United Nations system to join forces to combat the pervasive pandemic of violence against women and girls.



November 25 launches "The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence", concluding on International Human Rights Day (December 10). The 2023 campaign called on all citizens of the world to show how much they care about ending violence against women and girls by demanding governments worldwide to share how they are investing in gender-based violence prevention. As Greta Thunberg, a young climate and environment activist has stated, "[When enough people come together, change happens and we can achieve almost anything](#)". So instead of looking for hope, start creating it."

Credit photo UNwomen

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FREEDOM, EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL



[Freedom, Equality and Justice for All](#) was the theme for the International Day for Human Rights on December 10, that commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948 by all 58 of the then member-states of the United Nations. These rights must be respected and guaranteed to all individuals. They constitute a universal protection system. In addition to those defined in the [Declaration](#), they have been further delineated to address specific the rights of migrants, indigenous peoples, and people living with

disabilities.

Much of our contemporary world is marked by armed conflicts, inequalities, racism, and disrespect for life. This has been made worse by the contemporary situation of human trafficking, pandemics, and climate change – all of which cause an ocean of miseries for peoples around the globe. Across the world today, as human rights defenders remind us at great cost to themselves and their very lives, the values and rights proclaimed in the UDHR which should constitute a basic frame of reference are too often no longer seriously considered.

As the witness of the life and death of [SND Dorothy Stang](#) attests, these prophets are subject to reprisals, harassment, torture, disappearance and even assassination. Their own lives, and those of their loved ones, are endangered. The frequent reign of impunity in parts of the world does not help; the values and proclaimed rights are flouted.

The celebration of the 75th anniversary of the UDHR was an opportunity for reflection and a call renew the foundations of respect for all human rights to put an end to violations of rights so that all women and men everywhere enjoy them and fulfill their duties as global citizens. This would ensure a world where life will be good for everyone.



Sister Dorothy Stang,
SNDdeN

On this occasion, the president of the General Assembly awarded the winners of the prize in the field of Human Rights. This year's winners were the Human Rights Center "Viasna", based in Belarus, Julienne Lusenge from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies from Jordan, Julio Pereyra from Uruguay and the Global Coalition of civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, social movements and local communities.



Julienne Lusenge giving her speech after the award

UN CALENDAR: FORUMS AND SESSIONS

N.B: Sisters wishing to participate in one of the sessions or forums described below can send a request letter to the NGO office address: sndatun@sndden.org
Sisters interested in the congregation Justice and Peace Network are invited to participate in the training sessions given by the Coalition of Religious Women for Justice (JCoR).

62nd Session of the Commission on Social Development. (CSocD)

February 5 - 14, 2024 at the U.N. in New York. <https://rb.gy/dv02j4>

68th Session of the Commission on Status of Women (CSW)

March 11-22, 2024, at the U.N. in New York. <https://rb.gy/jobnsw>

23rd U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)

April 15-26, 2024, at the U.N. in New York. <https://rb.gy/fw0hf1>

Civil Society Conference

Date: May 9-10, 2024, at the U.N. in Nairobi, Kenya. <https://rb.gy/slplk00>

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

Date: July 8-17, 2024, at the U.N. in New York. [HLPF](#)

The NGO Office of SNDatUN would especially encourage sisters from Brazil, Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, which are the countries that will formally present a review of their progress in achieving the SDGs this year.