

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

January, 2008



UN Millennium Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

A cardinal principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the inalienable dignity of every human life.

This is in accord with the Earth Charter, Section III, No. 12:

UPHOLD THE RIGHT OF ALL, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION TO A NATURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTIVE OF HUMAN DIGNITY, BODILY HEALTH, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES.

One practical aspect of this is highlighted by MDG 5: the aim to improve maternal health.

Many people consider the day their child was born to be the happiest day in their life, in the world's wealthiest countries, that is.

In developing countries, a woman dies from complications in childbirth every minute – about 529,000 per year.

In September, 2001, 147 heads of state collectively endorsed the effort to reduce child mortality rate by 2/3, and maternal mortality rate by 3/4 by the year 2015.

WHO (the World Health Organization) reports that some progress has been made in reducing maternal deaths and the resultant orphaning of children, but only 17% of countries are on track to meet these goals.

What can be done to help? Poverty, the debt burden on poor countries, and the consequent lack of professional medical help are key to this situation. Continue to lobby our government to fulfill its pledge to donate .7% of GNP to aid the MDG war on world poverty.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“But this is a people plundered and hated, all of them
Trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons...They have
Become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have
Been made loot, with no one to say, “Send them back.”

IS 42:22

“Trafficking in persons - in which men, women and children from all over the globe are transported to other countries for the purposes of forced prostitution or labor - inherently rejects the dignity of the human person and exploits conditions of global poverty.”

From *Strangers No Longer, Together on the Journey of Hope*

United Conference of Catholic Bishops

“No effort should be spared to urge civil authorities and international commerce to fight these abuses and to offer young children the legal protections they justly deserve.” -

Pope Benedict XVI

The United States Government estimates that approximately 800,000 persons are trafficked across international borders each year, and that trafficking of women and children for the sex industry and for labor is prevalent in all regions of the US. An estimated 50,000 women and children are trafficked annually within our country!

What can we do? First of all, we can become more aware of this situation, and help alert others to its reality. Many practical steps can be found, as well as pertinent information, on the websites noted below. As a Congregation, we will be exploring how we can join with others who are addressing this problem in various ways.

<http://www.madebysurvivors.com>

<http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/cimjust/human.htm>

<http://www.polarisproject.org>

<http://www.interpol.int/Public/THB/default.asp>

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/traffickingweb.shtml>

Submitted by the Peace and Justice Committee