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School Sisters of Notre Dame submit statement on girls' education to Commission on Status of Women for consideration during 51st session

As a Non-Governmental Organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the School Sisters of Notre Dame are afforded a powerful platform for advocacy.

Responding to that responsibility, the School Sisters of Notre Dame have authored a statement on the critical issue of girls' education for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women during its 51st session February 26-March 9 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame, who are sending a delegation of 25 students and adults representing Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America to the session, also have co-signed three other statements on the topics of trafficking, migration and ending discrimination against the girl child.

The SSND-authored statement, in addressing the session's priority theme of eliminating of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, asserts that education is key to ending discrimination and violence against girls and achieving equality and development.

"Increasing girls' access to quality education is one of the most important tools available to empower girls within the family and society," according to the School Sisters of Notre Dame. "As that happens, they not only increase their own agency but improve the well-being of their families and help to transform their communities."

Rapid progress toward ending discrimination and violence against girls and achieving equality can be made if governments and their citizens will undertake the systemic reform of education including, mobilizing the political will necessary to ensure quality education for all girls, developing comprehensive national education strategies which target girls most in need and commit national and international resources for girls' education.

"Governments are responsible for the goals they have set for girls' education," the statement asserts. "Non-Governmental Organizations have long been a force in promoting and delivering education, especially to those most vulnerable and neglected. They must continue to work with national governments, local communities, and UN agencies to build educational capacity. Finally, it is the responsibility of women, men, girls and boys, everywhere to mobilize political will to meet the commitments made to ensure gender equality in education."

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has been a registered NGO (non-governmental organization) with the U.N.'s Department of Public Information since 1993. In 1998, SSND received special consultative status with the ECOSOC. School Sisters of Notre Dame actively participate in the work of the United Nations by presenting written and oral testimony to ECOSOC and its commissions, particularly on issues related to the welfare and education of girls and women, economic justice, and sustainable development.

As an NGO, the School Sisters of Notre Dame have a responsibility to promote knowledge of the principles and activities of the United Nations and disseminate information about the United Nations and its work to their constituencies. NGOs like the School Sisters of Notre Dame provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international agreements.

The congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is an international community of women religious. Impelled by the Spirit and mission of Jesus, the Sisters educate with a world vision believing that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. The sisters and their colleagues seek to empower women, youth and persons who are poor or marginalized and strive to change systems of poverty and injustice. Nearly 4,000 School Sisters of Notre Dame minister in 35 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania.

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The statement on education authored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame has been co-signed by 23 other organizations: the Congregations of St. Joseph, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Movement of Mothers, and Zonta International non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with ECOSOC; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, FEMVISION, Fraternite Notre Dame, Inc., International Association Sisters of the Presentation, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, League of Women Voters of the United States, Grail, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, SOS Kinderdorf International, UNANIMA International, and Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, Inc. non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with ECOSOC; and Armenian Relief Society, Loretto Community, and United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society, United Church of Christ – Board for World Ministries non-governmental organizations on the roster of ECOSOC.

Additional information about the Commission on the Status of Women is available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm>.

The full SSND NGO statement is available under the "official documents" section (E/CN.6/2007/NGO/12) at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw51/OfficialDocuments.html>.

For more information about the School Sisters of Notre Dame, please visit <http://www.gerhardinger.org/english/index.htm> or <http://www.ssnd.org/>.

School Sisters of Notre Dame Delegation
U.N. Commission on the Status of Women
February 26 – March 9

Participant's Name	Adult or Student	Country	School
Sr. Leonora Tucker, SSND	A	Ghana	Notre Dame Senior Secondary School, Sunyani
Agnes Agyemang-Barnie	S	Ghana	Notre Dame Senior Secondary School, Sunyani
Sr. Yvonne Nosal, SSND	A	Peru	Mother Theresa Technical Secondary School, Piura
Sr. Marleny Bardales, SND	A	Peru	Mother Theresa Technical Secondary School, Piura
Vanessa de los Milagros Juárez Arévalo	S	Peru	Mother Theresa Technical Secondary School, Piura
Felizitas von Boeselager	A	Germany	Gymnasium Brede, Brakel
Nadine Binder	S	Germany	Gymnasium Brede, Brakel
Juliane Bungartz	A	Germany	Theresia-Gerhardinger-Gymnasium, Munich
Stephanie Patricia Braun	S	Germany	Theresia-Gerhardinger-Gymnasium, Munich
Susan Connell Muth	A	USA	Notre Dame Preparatory School, Baltimore
Yasmin Karimian	S	USA	Notre Dame Preparatory School, Baltimore
Linda Rogers Kennedy	A	USA	Notre Dame High School, St. Louis
Jamie St. Eve	S	USA	Notre Dame High School, St. Louis
Sr. Mary P. Colantuoni, SSND	A	USA	St. Saviour High School, Brooklyn
Caitlin Byrnes	S	USA	St. Saviour High School, Brooklyn
Olivia Reekie	A	USA	Academy of the Holy Angels, Demarest
Jennifer Testi	S	USA	Academy of the Holy Angels, Demarest
Sr. Ethel Howley, SSND	A	USA	Staff--Ass't Director JPIC, Atlantic Midwest Province
Sr. Eileen Reilly, SSND	A	USA	Staff--Director JPIC, Atlantic Midwest Province
Sr. Carolyn Jost, SSND	A	USA	Staff--Vocation Ministry, Atlantic Midwest Province
Nancy Elizabeth Huggins	A	USA	Staff--Student, Mt. Mary College
Sr. Ann Scholz, SSND	A	USA	Staff--Director SSND UN Office
Julie Gilberto-Brady	A	USA	Staff--Communications Coordinator
Sr. Joan Burke, SND	A	USA	Staff--Director SND UN Office
Sr. Rosemary Reynolds, SND	A	USA	Staff--Guidance Counselor