

MERCY JUSTICE
AFRICA CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND JUSTICE

HELD IN NAKURU KENYA FROM 16TH TO 24TH FEBRUARY 2001.
(Zambia; South Africa; Nigeria; Kenya.)

Objectives of the Conference

- To gather dreams and wisdom of our own realities regarding the conference in Ireland in 1996 and the Pan African conference in Zambia in 1998.
- To listen afresh, to the cry of Africa and the impact of globalisation, transnationals, debt and the scourge of HIV/AIDS.
- To plan ways of getting heard and communicating our reality at our next International Conference in South Africa in September, 2001.
- To find ways to continue to utilize our resources and influence across the world to bring about transformation of unjust economic structures which impoverish women, children, the earth and all peoples, focussing on trans national corporations and majority of the world's unjust debt.

We will accomplish this by:

- Learning about the realities of each of our areas.
- Sharing information on how (Globalisation, Transnationals, Debt and HIV/AIDS) is affecting us and how we are responding to the challenges.
- Formulating action plan that can be implemented in each area.
- Finding ways of making our network more of a reality and how best we can communicate (Link person, Commissions, Communities, Local level and globally).
- Evaluation and way forward for the next Conference in Africa.
- We hope to have the Eucharist included in our schedule which we can negotiate together how best we can do that.

INPUT ON GLOBALISATION ~ 17.2.01

(By Fr. Gabriel Dolan – Kiltegan Fathers).

Globalisation is a reality, which affects our economy, religion and culture. To understand how globalisation works, the participants played the Star Power Game where:

- Each player was given an envelope with five chips of different colours in it.
- Each colour represented different points, the highest being Gold with 50 points.
- Every first player was given a square shaped badge, every second player a circular badge and every third player a star shaped badge.
- Rules included; players had to hold hands while trading. Once holding hands trading had to take place. There was no talking unless trading. Trading had to be only one on one chip. Non-compliance with the rules led to 'imprisonment'. Folded arms meant that a trader had finished trading or the trader did not want to enter into trading.

Observations while game was in progress:

As the game commenced, one player was left with one chip less than she started with which led to protests from the player and her group. The player with the extra chip refused to give it back insisting that she had traded for it fairly from another player. She felt justified to keep it and her group supported her. The Game leader (Fr. Gabriel) did not intervene leading to more protests and the player's levelled charges of being ignored against him. (The leader withdrew from the game and left the people at it).

The group with the highest points became the 'elite' group. As the game continued, most players were aiming at being included in that group. (The G7/8 countries were emerging).

Since they had the highest scores, the group was given a chance to make rules for the rest of the players on how the game was to continue being played. More protests arose leading to the disruption of the process of making the rules. The other players protested against not being consulted and unfair trading practice. Some players were 'imprisoned' for protesting, as was the 'media' person. Those who escaped 'prison' continued with protests until they were invited for 'round table discussions'. Eventually, the game leader who had kept his distance until this time intervened and this brought the group together. They pulled their chairs and entered into a round of negotiations.

Feedback from the players:

1. There was suspicion from the beginning in regard to the rules and to the mode of playing. These suspicions were expressed as the game went on. Players asked why they were not consulted.

2. However, when the player received the bonus points and got elevated to a higher position (in another group), the other players felt forgotten. At this point, most players felt that it was better to 'chance it alone'.
3. Players in the elevated positions reported a lot of pressure as they got higher rankings. They felt a desire to go back to their former groups but were not able to. They felt compassion for their former group members but succumbed to pressure from their new group.
4. Players also reported an element of revenge. They reported that once an unfair practice had started, they found they doing the same knowing that it was illegal. The reason was given as desperation to at least get some higher points to enable elevation to a higher group.
5. Players reported a struggle between the 'good business sense' and compassion. There was compassion for the player with the least points in each group at the beginning and when the game leader offered bonus points, most players in the group gave them to that player.
6. Some players especially between group and individual ambitions also reported tension. As individuals from the groups were elevated to higher positions, this became more evident and lack of trust was growing in the group.
7. Some players in the 'elite' group reported feelings of shame since they felt that they had reached that position arising from someone else's kindness. Once they were there, they did not get a chance to do anything to help their former group members. They reported feelings of disruption even within themselves as the protests were gathering momentum from the other discriminated groups.
8. A player reported feelings of helplessness and fright especially in the height of the protests. She noted that people who gamble with things and life end with success or failure. She wondered on what makes people succeed or fail.
9. A player noted that while protests were on the group could not proceed with the discussions. A player in that group was trying to speak for the poor when the talks were interrupted. She noted that if talks were not allowed to go on, that voice of 'what about the poor?' would not be heard.
10. A player complained at the anger levelled against her by members of her own group after being elevated to the 'elite' group noting that she had risen there on her own accord. She had not gained any bonus points from the group.

11. The lower group joined hands with the 'middle' group. Some players in the 'middle' group however, did not want to at first but later did so. They reported that they had felt unable to make decision as to whether they should befriend the 'elite' group or whether they should be in solidarity with the 'lower' group.

12. The trick of the game:

- Unfair distribution of the chips. (People do not start on an equal footing in the world even as soon as they are born.
- The leader withdrew from the game leaving the players at it with unfair rules and mode of playing. (The World Economist).

Drawing Parallels

As the game continued, many similarities with today's situations were noted. The players noted the following,

The game leader was like 'The Economist' of the world who decides on the rules and mode of running the world's economies. Often he does not consult with nations, which will be affected by his decisions. Many players drew a parallel between the game leader and the IMF and The World Bank.

The players also noted that the spirit of competitiveness prevalent in the game was also the spirit in today's world where everyone wants all the best things even if it means being unfair to others or dealing illegally.

The widening gap between the groups was also an indication of the current gap between the rich and the poor in today's world. They also noted that it was continually widening.

There was notable ambition to move from lower to higher groups. The players noted that in the world, many people who are in unfavourable conditions always want to move ahead. Once there, they are not always able to go back and help their brothers and sisters in the same conditions as they were before mainly due to pressure. This has also created contempt for the poor. Even though some of them move to higher classes on their own merit, some use dubious ways. This was in light of the player's willingness to even trade illegally to acquire the necessary points.

The players also noted that the 'Economist' plays a very big role whether by participation or by withdrawing as the game leader did. Either way, he affects the outcome of the world's economies and especially of the developing countries that rely on his favourable opinions.

At first, the group members offered the bonus points to the player with the least points. As the game continued, the players found themselves giving the bonus points to the player with the highest points. The players concluded that in the world, some nations

have compassion for others and are willing to share with those who do not have much. But as the stakes go higher, they are forced to withdraw their support.

The players also noted that laws to protect and help the poor received no support. Even in the UN, many member countries are unwilling to listen to the voice of the poor and to support laws, which will help them. The players noted that even after some of them were 'imprisoned' for protesting, the rest were continuing with negotiations for their release and for improvement of their conditions. This, the players said, gives hope to our world where negotiations still go on in the midst of injustices.

The players also noted a similarity in the protests with those, which had happened in Nice, Prague, Washington and Geneva.

There was indecision by the middle group as to which side they should join. This was likened to the middle classes indecision on who to support, the rich or the poor. This indecision was especially more noticeable here in Kenya.

The players also noted a tension to remain in the 'elite' group since from there the only other way was to go down. This fear led to panic and desire to protect oneself as much as possible not to get low point chips. The players likened this with the rich societies of today who are in such a panic over becoming poor that they do anything to remain where they are. This is especially the case in America and Europe where the farmers are subsidized heavily by the governments. This leads to cheaper goods which means that goods from Africa where there are no or minimal subsidies are unable to compete in their markets. The players noted that this was among the unfair trade practices arising from globalisation.

The game leader concluded by informing the players on the need to strike a balance between activism and anarchy in protesting against injustices. There was also a need to find a person who will unify and be supported by all nations. Then perhaps, the voice of the poor will be heard.

History of Globalisation

Globalisation started after the end of the cold war. Democratisation of nations brought about optimism for a global village. Countries could now have relations with each other.

In the midst of globalisation however, culture and ethnicity brought about divisions. With the end of the cold war, which had united countries beyond barriers, others came up especially the clamour for individuality along ethnic and cultural lines. In Europe particularly, boundaries were continually drawn every other week.

Styles of war changed too. In the First World War, 90% of casualties were soldiers and war was between states. Now, 80% of casualties are civilians and war is within states. Clearly as some barriers come down, more and more are coming up. Perhaps this could be arising from issues, which were not resolved before, and not necessarily from globalisation.

The actors have changed but the rules have not. Instead of colonization, now there is imperialism. Instead of the British, Italians or the Germans, now there are British, Italian and German multinationals among others. There is the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. An example is the 'coca-cola-isation and commercialisation of irrelevant holidays e.g. the Valentines Day where only the multinationals benefit.

Links between poverty and globalisation

As mentioned, the actors have changed but the rules have not. The Debt phenomenon has created a cancer in developing countries where more money is used in servicing debts than in helping the citizens of the countries.

Example:

- In Zambia, only USD \$3.00 are spend on healthcare for each person per annum.
- In Kenya, 14 Million people live on less than USD \$1.00 per day. Kenya is second in the world after Brazil in the disparity between the rich and the poor.
- Enrolment in schools was 89.5% in 1991 which dropped to 79.1% in 1995. Schools are understaffed by 30,000 teachers.
- Kshs. 400 billion was either looted or misused between 1990-1997.
- The average survival income is Kshs 1,621.25 per month. The average income in 1980 was USD \$ 520. This dropped to USD \$275 in the year 2000.
- 20 Million Kenyans will also need food relief this year.

Challenges:

There is need to challenge the negative aspects of globalisation. Among this are;

- Challenging the male dominated spirituality especially with regard to women and children.
- Corruption needs to be eradicated. Multinationals have formed a habit of offering kickbacks to leaders of countries so that they can sustain their monopolies. This should be stopped.
- There is greater need in the face of all this, for the church to search for a spirituality, which is balanced especially as far as women, and children are concerned.

- There is a struggle between giving handouts (*reactive*) and empowering (*proactive*)
- There is also a need for unity between different groups to help the people become empowered. There is need for dialogue and especially interfaith dialogue.
- Transformation in the industrialized world is needed since if it does not happen there first, it may not happen anywhere else at all. A proposal for the Mercy Sisters to have *one person at the welfare level*, another at the developmental level and another at the empowerment level were made. The Mercy Sisters were challenged to raise their voices even higher to speak for the oppressed.
- Women themselves were challenged to change their mentality and demand for Justice and for their rights. A case in point was where a girl was raped and the rapist was arrested and sentenced to prison. The mother protested and even appealed for the man to be released. Another woman withdrew a case, which had been brought to court on behalf of her daughter who had been raped. Pay offs were cited in most cases as the reasons behind the change of heart. This brought back the issue of poverty and economic empowerment of women.

Positive effects arising from globalisation:

- Awareness of other people, their cultures and religions has increased. Appreciation of diversity allows it to change us and breeds' tolerance and humanness in our actions and us. We remember that God works in all cultures and religions.
- Integration and partnership is enhanced through shared experiences, actions, faith and sharing prayer. We remember the pluralistic inclusiveness of God in creation.
- We should often ask ourselves whether we are trying to build the church, trying to build the church so that we can build the Kingdom of God or actually building the Kingdom of God.
- In this light, we should examine our traditional spirituality vs. spirituality for our global world, our culture Vs. Globalisation and exclusions within the church in an era of inclusions in globalisation.

INPUT 2 ~ THE REFUGEE SITUATION AND ITS RELATION WITH JUSTICE & PEACE: (By Sr. Joan Pietron RSM–South Africa Province)

A refugee is a person whom through a well-founded fear of persecution flees his/her home. Many of the refugees coming to South Africa are well-educated and skilled individuals. They were lawyers, doctors, teachers and professionals in their own countries. They were the 'cream of their respective countries'.

Generations of children have known nothing but hate and war. The driving force of war is greed. Greed for money, power and control from corrupt leaders and well-schooled masters of exploitation (Multi-nationals, IMF, GATT etc). Why have people given so many powers to the IMF and the World Bank to control them?

Refugees are murdered everyday and there are daily reports of attempted suicides among the refugees in the country. There are no poor countries in Africa, only poor people who have been denied a right to fend for themselves. Attached is the full report:

Contribution from participants:

- The attention of a boy who was abducted from his family here in Kenya while he was at the age of three was noted as a successful story of our involvement with refugees. Through Sr. Joan and the refugees the group helped to identify the boy after five years of his abduction and realized that the man who claimed to be the father was actually not the real father. The abductor had used the boy for his own interest and the boy was abused through and through. Thankfully, the boy was returned back through the collaboration of the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Red Cross to his home only to find that his mother had passed away two weeks before the good news of his return.
- The participants wondered whether there are other cases of that nature and what steps are taken when children are unaccompanied. Thankfully Sr. Joan and her team try to trace the homes of where the minors come from.
- A participant shared how she felt when she came to Kenya from her own country. She shared about her difficulties in adapting to the culture and conditions of her new home. She was an alien by choice, yet how much more painful are the difficulties that the refugees face. She concluded that they perhaps felt a thousand times worse than she had felt.
- Another participant gave her account of what happens in Ireland. Usually, it is announced when the refugees are coming. They are then put in the remotest part of the town or county away from the hub of everyday life. Their houses are the lowliest among all the people and are continually looked down upon. She commented that this could be because of the fear that the people have that the refugees are coming for economic advantages. People also feel insecure when faced with the diversity of the refugees.

- In Europe, it is even more difficult. A refugee is faced with a barrage of questions after which they are denied entry and deported back to the place they were fleeing from.
- In South Africa, refugees take from 6 months to a year before being granted refugee status. During that time they are not allowed to work and their children are not allowed to study. They are also not accommodated nor given any material benefits. This means that they sleep on the streets in whatever weather and beg for food since they do not have any money. They are treated like lepers by the local populace and even by the government. If they violate any of the rules by working for example, they are immediately taken to camps for deportation. Refugees are very vulnerable in South Africa and are often targeted. This is enhanced by the fact that they rely on governmental services for health, education etc. Once refugees are identified, they are harassed and even killed. A case in point was the recent news report on CNN about S.A police who set dogs loose on two young refugees.

DEBT and ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: (By Prof. Wangari Maathai)

Systemic change means to tackle not only the symptoms but the causes as well. To not only heal and help the sick and poor but to also focus and resolve the causes to why they are sick and poor.

Aspects connected with debt:

Participants were given questions to ponder on and give their answers. Below are the questions and answers:

What problems do we face today in our locality, nation and the world?

- Poverty, Corruption, Unemployment, Violation of women and children's rights, Lack of water, Street children and Alcoholism etc.

Where do you think these problems are coming from?

- Bad governance, Kenyans are quiet, docile, gentle people and need to change. They fear fighting for their rights. Uneven distribution of resources, Greed, Wide gap between the rich and poor. Perhaps we are on the wrong bus.

What could be the state of your mind for you to take the wrong bus? Why would you take a bus for Nakuru whereas you intended to take a bus to Mombasa?

- State of mind not focused because my husband is sick and I want to get the medicines quickly so that I can get back to him and the children, I was manipulated, I was misguided, I was not able to read the correct destination plate on the bus, I was confused, I was afraid to ask, I was afraid of the presence of police in the bus I wanted to take, I did not have enough self confidence to ask for the right information, Arrogance.

Prof. Maathai noted that many of the problems we have are of our own making as evidenced in the answers given. The next question was: *What do we do to solve these problems?*

1. Educating people to carry their own responsibility for making a decision. Educating people to start from within themselves, their families, localities, villages and eventually the nation. She gave an example of Soil erosion in farms. Farmers were encouraged to start digging trenches, making terraces and planting grasses near riverbeds to stem soil erosion in their own farms. Later, they were mobilized to do it as a community project.
2. Farmers are also encouraged to generate their own seedlings by planting crops, which will provide them with seeds for the next season instead of genetically modified varieties which have no seedlings forcing the farmer to buy from shops thus continuing to enrich the multinationals involved.
3. Another solution is to make a concrete decision to improve the situation we find ourselves in and acting on it. Prof. Maathai noted that apathy is worse than the problem itself.

Environmental degradation and the debt issue:

Where did this debt come from and why?

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, most African countries had become independent. The leaders identified diseases, poverty and ignorance as the major challenges. The presidents at that time had powers to conduct business as they liked and they did so in the name of their respective countries. The people had put them on a pedestal and the general attitude was that they were beyond reproach. The time this was happening, a lot of money was coming into the Western countries from rich oil resources in the Middle East. The Western countries wondered what they would do with all this money.

The idea of lending the money to African countries to tackle their problems was mooted. African presidents were persuaded to accept loans by their Western counterparts. They were promised low interest rates and concessions on payments. Some of these loans even came in as machineries and equipments. Since the coffee, tea and other sectors were performing well in the recipient African countries, the leaders thought they would be able to repay the loans on time. Out of inexperience, they accepted. However, as soon as they accepted the loans, interest rates shot up, the sectors started performing poorly and the prices of commodities, which would bring in foreign exchange, came down. They asked for rescheduling of the loan repayments. This went on for years with interest rates accruing at an alarming rate. This is why the African countries find themselves with huge amounts of debt today.

Points to ponder:

- The rescheduling of loans means that most countries will never be able to repay. The donors know it as well. African countries will be in perpetual bondage.
- 80% of the Heavily Indebted Countries are African countries.
- In Kenya, each person owes at least Kshs. 25,000 from birth.
- Kenya is not listed as an indebted country simply because it is able to make repayments regularly. Not that it is a rich country, but because the government is willing to sacrifice education, health and the life of it's people so that it can keep borrowing to finance the large police force, army and arms purchases to keep itself in power.

Effects of debts:

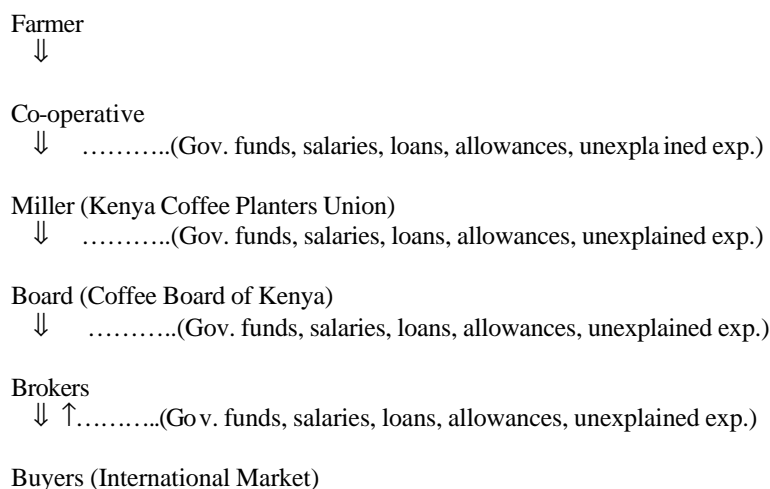
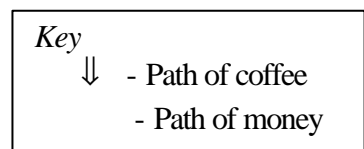
Example from the coffee sector:

Coffee is one of the main exports from Kenya. In the post-independence times, their colonial masters did not allow Africans to plant coffee, tea or any other cash crops. After independence, this was one of the freedoms the new country enjoyed. Farmers were, with help of loans from the government and which it had been loaned the Western countries, encouraged to plant these cash crops. This went on very rapidly and to the expense of major food crops.

Huge tracts of land were cleared to pave way for the planting of coffee and tea plantations. To maintain quality, farmers were not allowed to intercrop their coffee with other plants (e.g. potatoes, beans etc). Apart from the environmental degradation emanating from this, it also meant that food security became more and more threatened.

Now foreign exchange earnings from these cash crops are used to pay off the current debts, leaving the people hungry and impoverished.

The Path of Kenyan Coffee:



There have been recordings of Kshs –5000.00 from their sale of coffee. This means that they *actually have a debt*.

Present situation:

- With a Kshs –5000 and no intercropping, the farmer is hungry and poor. There is no money for basic necessities like food, clothing, health and education for the children.
- In reality, the AID Kenya receives is really trade. For every \$1.00 coming in as ‘aid’, \$3.00 goes out in repayment. Who is aiding whom?
- The official forest cover should be 10%. Currently there is only ½% forest cover in the whole country. Yet money from the crops planted in place of forests is not reaching the people.

REPORT FROM ZAMBIA (By Sr. Andrea RSM)

The General state of Zambia:

1. Zambia is currently experiencing increased poverty levels.
2. Collapse of the copper mines have left many unemployed and destitute.
3. There is increase in HIV/AIDS and a reluctance to acknowledge the situation leading to a high rate of infections. There is a high rate of trauma from deaths due to the disease. Some children have lost as much as two families i.e. their original family and the subsequent foster family.
4. There is general economic stagnation as copper was Zambia’s main exports.
5. Poor education facilities, lack of well trained teachers and delay or non-payment of teacher’s salary is threatening the education sector.
6. Government reforms as stipulated by the World Bank and the SAPs have left the country in bad condition. Retrenchments, liquidation of companies, economic reforms, collapse of co-operatives and money lending institutions have left their mark on people’s lives.
7. There is a high infant mortality rate and maternal deaths are on the increase. In a 1998 study, it was reported that 18% of deaths in women and girls are maternal.
8. Life expectancy has dropped from 46% to 37%.
9. Changes in sectoral spending have not been to an advantage. In the agricultural sector, the government has allocated very little money to improve it. Many families survive on one meal per day and often one meal per two or three days.

Positive results:

- Zambia has embraced multi-partyism even though the opposition is weak. This enhances freedom of the individual.
- An organisation called Women For Change has been liaising with the local leaders to promote the rights of women and children. Among its success stories is the almost complete eradication of 'cleansing' where a woman was supposed to have sexual relations with a man to cleanse her if her husband died. The group is also advocating for women's rights to own property and to speak in public.
- The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission have been in the forefront of the lobbying for debt cancellation. It has an Economic Justice unit, a paralegal training project and a parliamentary unit, which focuses on parliamentary issues affecting the people. One of its functions is to produce a sketch of pre and postal budgets reflecting the people's wishes.
- Attached is the full report as prepared by Sr. Andrea:

Comments from participants:

Since many families are affected by HIV/AIDS, what is being done to help the orphans?

- They are usually looked after by the extended family i.e. grandparents, aunties, uncles etc. However, there is an increasing number of child headed household. These are children as young as sixteen or seventeen who have to take on the parental role.
- Centres have been set up to take care of the children and to feed them by the government and the church but these offer day care rather than full time care.
- There are programs, which sponsor orphans to keep them at school. Some are governmental and others church based.
- Several orphanages for infants have been set up mostly by church based groups.
- Community schools have been set up as well. These are a type of informal school for the poor who cannot afford private or governmental schools. There is a program of sponsorship for Grade Twelve students from these schools who are taken for a one-year teacher-training course and then reposted back to the schools. They are put on a 9 months non-paid probation before being employed.

What are the Sisters of Mercy in Zambia currently involved in?

- Co-ordination of education at the district level.
- Co-operation with women groups e.g. the Women for Change and the Catholic Women Association to promote women and children's issues. Also involved in the Small Christian Community groups.
- Offer assistance in the "City of Hope" project run by Salesians.

- Help out at a hospice for the terminally ill.
- Provide home based care for HIV/AIDS patients and provide counselling for people living with AIDS.
- Assist in community health care projects.
- Involved in a project that develops schools with funding from the E.U



REPORT FROM NIGERIA (By Sr. Goretti RSM)

Introduction:

Nigeria is a large country, blessed with rich human, natural and mineral resources. Its population is in the region of 100M. Nigeria was created as a nation in the early 19th Century. Lord Suggard, amalgamated the southern and northern protectorates and applied two different administrative systems: - the direct rule in southern parts and the indirect rule in northern parts of Nigeria. Direct rule made contact with white Missionaries possible and consequently Christian values and systems were adopted. Indirect rule entailed the administering of northern Nigeria by Muslim Emirs and Missionaries were excluded from this territory. Consequently, minimal contact existed between Christians and Muslims during the colonial era.

1960 brought Nigerian independence and a constitution that guaranteed freedom of association and of religion. Now and then, there were religious skirmishes but 1980 brought the first religious disturbance of note to all. Riots took place in Kano and about 5,000 were killed and 16 Million dollars worth of destruction was caused. The Maitsine riots of Yola in 1984 caused 763 deaths and millions of dollars worth of damages caused by arsonists. Maitsine riots also happened in other towns in the north with death tolls of up to 2,000 people.

The Kaduna riots of last year (2000) were the worst to date with an estimated 3,000 deaths and a quarter of the city destroyed. The immediate cause of these riots was the “intolerant approach of Muslims towards peoples of other faiths”. Christian schools and hospitals have been taken over by Muslims. Mosques have been built in the campuses of Christian schools. The Kaduna state government have financed Arabic/Islamic legal colleges. Nigeria has been smuggled into the Organisation of Islamic Conference. Christians receive second- class treatment in appointments/promotions in spite of the qualifications.

Since the present civilian regime came into power, some northern governors have expanded the scope of the Muslim Sharia law beyond the limits of the 1999 constitution. This constitution presupposes that Nigeria is a secular country and the Sharia government now is aiming towards making it a religious state.

Nigeria’s debt stands at over \$30 Billion, which is 40% of Africa’s debt.

- Debt per person is \$275
- Debt service per person is \$22
- GNP per person is \$272

Nigeria pays out \$104.54 in debt service for every \$1 received in aid grants. Recently Nigeria has been removed from the list of **Heavily Indebted Countries (HIPC)**.

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REPORT FROM SOUTH AFRICA (By. Sr. Joan Pearton)

The Reality of South Africa:

- South Africa pays 48 Billion Rand per year in debt repayments.
- Corruption is increasing at a daily rate.
- It is very difficult to challenge the government and even to point out injustices. It is not willing to listen to the problems facing the people.
- There is increased intolerance of others. Xenophobia is high as well as increased racism.
- There is non- delivery of services, which the government had promised the people. This is leading to discontent and increased impoverishment.
- The country is experiencing very high taxation.
- High number of refugees and human rights abuses.
- Privatisation is leading to loss of income leading to increasing poverty levels.
- HIV/AIDS has increased.
- Oppression and violence against women.
- Need for protection of the environment.

On a positive note, South Africa has inherited a good infrastructure system and there is no war and bloodshed.

Education:

- 2 Billion Rand has been spent over the last five years to set up a new education system. It is now clear that the new education system will not work. Instead, the Montessori system of education has gained popularity and is being used by most schools. The proposed new education, which the government has been working on, is too expensive. This means that most families cannot afford and therefore poor children will not be educated.
- Salaries for teachers are usually delayed or not paid at all.

Health:

- There are no medicines in government clinics and the only treatment available in government hospitals is costly.
- There is no real commitment to tackle the AIDS issue. 14 Million have AIDS and in Kwazulu – Natal, 1 out of every 3 persons is HIV +ve.
- Subsidies to social services have been cut by 3%

Other Issues:

- Pensioners receive only 500 Rand a month and they are often not paid in time. Sometimes they have to queue for up to 10 hours.
- Reconciliation among the different groups has not been a success. In fact the height of discrimination has increased especially against foreigners.
- Movement towards privatisation has rendered many redundant and increased poverty levels.
- Environment is at an increased risk due to genetically engineered plants.

The full report is attached:

REPORT FROM KENYA (By Sr. Therese). (Most of the input was based on Kenya in relation to the world so we shall only give a short encounter of our participation)

The Justice and Peace Commission here in Kenya are quite active. We have about ten members. We have regular meetings and the attendant at the meetings is very good. In September 2000, Sr. Winnie Njuguna took up the position as the contact person of Kenya. She has an office in McAuley House in Makadara. She has had the opportunity of visiting all the communities in the province.

Our focus has been of giving awareness on Justice Issues to our Mercy Communities, the wider communities and ourselves. We had a Seminar for the Province in 1999 given by Mr. Michael Tanya – the Nairobi Arch-diocese Coordinator for Justice and Peace. He spoke on the development of the Justice and Peace Ministry in the archdiocese and the importance of our involvement in this area. Sr. Nuala Brannigan a Loreto Sister was the second speaker and she spoke on the Africa Charter and Human Rights.

We work in conjunction with the AOSK (Association of Sister Hood of Kenya) Justice and Peace. Their three focal points for the year are:

- March 8th Women's International Day
- June Environmental days
- December 10th Human Rights Day

We try to follow these dates.

Celebrating women's day is a way of bringing awareness to the whole society of the importance of Women, their dignity, their worth, and their huge contribution to society. Violence against women is a huge problem so it is a chance to look at women's rights and how their rights are neglected in the constitution. Many of our sisters have been involved in these programs. For example:

- Environment - Garbage has become a real menace and in our areas we have clean ups, tree planting when it is possible. The sisters Justice and Peace Commission wrote to Uchumi and Nakumatt (Super Markets) about the big problem of plastic bags and they got replies that the mentioned markets will look into it.
- Human Rights - Fr. Kaiser's death was a great shock to all Kenyans. He spoke out against the land Clashes and he had done a lot of research on the course of the land clashes and gave evidence at the enquiry into these clashes as well as trying to get justice for rape cases, girls who are forced to marry etc. Most people believe that government agents killed him. To protest his death the Bishops organised a march at the scene of his death in a way it was a protest against the government. Before the mass many walked in procession from Naivasha to the place, which is approximately 8km. Many Sisters of Mercy were present. For Human Rights day (10th December) the churches and the Human Rights groups organised another Mass. We the sisters are involved in that.

Review of the Constitution:

There was a big meeting in Safari Park where it was decided that there would be an opportunity for the people of Kenya to give their views on the constitution. Slowly it began to emerge that the review would be taken over by the Parliament and so the Religious leaders came in and started the 'Ufungamano' initiative, which would make sure that the people got a chance in the constitutional review. There was a big mass in the Catholic Basilica to launch the Ufungamano initiative and the sisters of Mercy were present.

- Ecumenical Prayer in Uhuru Park
- Seminar on the constitution Kitui Limuru conference Centre, Kamukunji - where people were given a chance to give their views.

Debt Relief:

We brought this up at our meetings and tried to see what we could do about it. We got signatures in our communities and in our different places of work. We wrote letters to Tony Blair on the Debt but to get anything done practically was very difficult. This was partly because there was so much emphasis regarding the constitutional review, partly because a lot of people felt that Kenya should not be forgiven because of "lootocracy" in the government. Even the Editorial of the Daily Nation didn't favour Debt Relief.

A Jesuit Priest gave a talk in Msongari on Globalisation, SAPs (Structural Adjustment Programs) Debt etc. People were very impressed and decided to do something.

Trocaire were very interested so we had a meeting together with Undugu Society, Human Rights group, ECO news, Active Non - Violence groups, Green Belt Movement, Muslims, other churches, and Religious groups. We had a facilitator and the outcome was that 'KENDRON' would be reviewed. We had fairly frequent meetings and we decided that we needed to spread awareness in Kenya regarding DEBT.

It was decided that we would have a demonstration with posters and paper chains, sacks etc. According to the Kenya Law if you are having a demonstration you write a letter to the Kenya Police, which we did. Demonstration took place as planned. We were guided by the Kenya Police and directed on where to pass. All was going well until when we got to the IMF offices and were about to issue our letters when we were placed under arrest. We ended up in all of us in the same police cell regardless of the age or gender. To make the long story short of our painful ordeal, we got out the next day after paying 3,000 Kenya shillings board. We were to appear in court in two weeks time for mention and eventually through the collaboration of our network and the support of our sisters the case was dismissed.

After the court case was dismissed we sat again and tried to put some order on the organisation. In fact we arranged for another demonstration in Kayole but we couldn't get a permit. We made loads of post cards, which we brought to the different Embassies protesting against the DEBT

We have seen some of the outcome of the campaign of the DEBT cancellation as: - the pressure from the IMF and World Bank to the government leaders to declare their Wealth and there is some increased awareness on the effects of DEBT among the ordinary folk.

Networking

- We network with the AOSK
- Arch Diocesan Justice and Peace
- National Office for Lenten Campaign
- Parishes/ Schools and Colleges
- Active None Violence (Chemi Chemi Ya Ukweli)
- Small Christian Communities
- Our Congregation through the MIJN

Way forward:

What are the common themes?

- Globalisation with regard to Transnationals, Trade, Debt, Disconnectedness with others and the environment, corruption and diversity of cultures.
- A new Spirituality with special attention on empowerment, HIV/AIDS, the suffering, not blaming others, poverty, reconciliation, people power, diversity of cultures, our way of looking at God and the cosmos, love and the need to belong.

- Networking with Communities. Sensitisation, awareness raising, the need to focus, need for identification of tools and need for cooperation with other groups on issues e.g. the debt issue.

What are the Major issues?

- Poverty
- Debt
- HIV/AIDS
- Destruction of the earth
- Refugees
- Concern over Islam in Nigeria
- Globalisation/Trade
- Gender i.e. women and children issues
- Concern over future for family unit
- Reconciliation
- Drugs.

What are the causes?

Debt:

- Unfair trading practices.
- Interference by the OAU, UN, G8, WTO and the WEF.
- Corruption.
- Bad governance

HIV/AIDS:

- Promiscuity
- Ignorance.
- Living/working conditions.
- Poverty.
- Lack of self-respect and self discipline.
- Forced Migration.
- Lifestyle and cultural practices e.g. wife inheritance and ‘cleansing’ of women.
- Media influence.
- Interference from pharmaceutical companies.
- Brainwashing.

Destruction of the Earth:

- Lack of clear land ownership.
- Land grabbing.
- Poor land usage.

- Cutting of trees for planting cash crops.
- Pollution by multi nationals.

What are the issues, which are of priority?

- World Debt as it affects the family and the environment
- HIV/AIDS.

What are the tools we can use to effect change?

- Networking with other lobby groups on the debt issue e.g. the AOSK (Association of Sisterhood of Kenya), Justice and Peace Commission e.g.
- Our Congregation and its institutions e.g. the Mercy International Justice Network, the Mercy Global Concern.
- Development of the Mercy charism anew.
- Develop two-way communication links with the UN desk. (Mercy Global Concern)
- Inter-countries conferences as well as our parishes, ministries, local community groups e.g. the CWA (Catholic Women Association), the CMA (Catholic Men Association), families and friends.
- Cooperation with other religious congregations and other faiths:
- Using holidays and public gatherings to spread the message.
- Establishing communication links with the business communities and other bodies with interest on the same issues.
- Human resources available e.g. people who are ready to offer help on behalf of the downtrodden e.g. lawyers, doctors e.g.
- Communication systems e.g. E-mail, Internet, Telephones e.g.
- Spiritual resources.

How important is Justice work to the Congregation?

In terms of backing, it has a lot of support from the Congregation members and from the Central Leadership Teams. It also receives support during congregational meetings and chapters.

In terms of membership however, it does not feature highly. During the congregational evaluation done last year, justice issues ranked second last. The provincial responses from the Central Leadership Teams rank it as a priority. Kenya, South Africa and Ireland have persons working full time in justice work. The level of involvement of congregational members is low and usually is only in signing petitions.

Future Requirements:

- A new name: There was a proposal and confirmation of a new all-inclusive name, which is now MERCY JUSTICE- AFRICA.

- A logo. A logo was presented and accepted which is on the front cover of this booklet. (Attached) not on the email.
- Decision on this was postponed until the completion of meeting of the chapters. (Waiting for the new Justice Coordinator to be named)

THE COMMUNITIES...

- Will take actions locally, nationally and globally.
- Through prayer and reflection will ACT JUSTLY, LOVE TENDERLY AND WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD.
- Will present analysis on their present reality.
- Will keep links with the contact person and office.

THE JUSTICE CONTACT PERSON IN THE COMMUNITY...

- Will encourage actions locally.
- Will raise awareness within communities.
- Will be bringing feedback to the Justice Commission office.
- Will be conducting education.
- Through prayer and reflections will strive to ACT JUSTLY, LOVE TENDERLY AND WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD.

THE JUSTICE PEACE COMMISSION...

- Will network with the justice offices.
- Will formulate strategies.
- Will filter and disseminate information.
- Will create awareness in the community e.g.
- Will involve in lobbying.
- Will keep in touch with the link persons (Educating, reporting initiatives, attending meetings local and international)
- Will be evaluating situations (note learnings, connect with others).
- Will have these with spirituality, stewardship e.g. Pastoral and theological reflections.

THE JUSTICE OFFICE...(Country contact person)

- Will network with the link person in the teams and other organisations as well.
- Will be in the Mercy Justice Commission group.
- Will work with contacts in communities.
- Will be aware of the justice issues and be alert to communities and network links.
- Will analyse issues, evaluate them, reflect upon them, initiate action, and facilitate awareness and response.
- Will receive and pass information, conduct research, raise resources and make choices on issues of priority.

- Will keep in mind the motto of the Mercy Justice –Africa through prayer, reflection and action.
- Will give feedback to the team link person, community contacts, the Justice Commission e.g.

THE LINK PERSON IN THE TEAM WILL...

- Communicate message of the team.
- Re. Finances, resources, information and action.
- Be in contact with the office, the commission, the communities for support and participation: for decisions and actions, for spirituality – prayer and reflection.

Feedback from the 16th - 18th were read and discussed

At our local level we take these issues and see how they fit into our chosen issues

Recommendations as to how we go forward and how best to use what we have. It was clear that those who attended the conference for the two days were very tuned in and was passionate about the issues raised.

The greatest contribution to the success of the conference was the presence and openness of people who participated. This will also be vital for the life and success of the International conference

The conviction that we bring back to our communities and our willingness to work with the issues, regardless of the future conference, is vital as an integral part of our Mercy lives.

A gentle approach is part of living justly.

A realisation that 'We are a Mercy core working with other local and global organisations in our efforts for justice'.

We are willing to get more in touch with the spirituality of justice, to educate ourselves and to seek and contribute useful information on what is available for this e.g. "resurgence"...

We need alternative ways of thinking.

Invite others outside our Mercy sisters to share experiences and actions with us.

Would we like to have representation from leadership at the international conference?
Yes, especially the link persons. The message needs to go back directly to our leadership teams to help ownership.

Ten places allocated to Africa, two each from Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa, the Institute and Kenya. Guidelines are included to help decide on representation from those bodies.

There is need to be aware that there are dangers inherent in expanding beyond those whom we know. The justice movement has been infiltrated at all levels to undermine or threaten the work for justice.

The persons who attend the International Conference will truly represent their country and will bring back the message clearly. They will be required to make connections, to improve their knowledge and be as informed as possible on national and global issues. Use of simple, generally accepted language is important. The audience needs to communicate and receive the message. Our greatest resources are the people and the earth, helping, inviting people to participate and share gifts. Our relationship with people and the earth are where we get our strength. We can only work with what we have. We would like to have a quarterly newsletter coming from Mercy Justice Africa through the African office to the different people on the ground.

Our connectedness with the earth is a central element of our spirituality. Fences built to promote tourism are shutting out the local people and building fences of disconnectedness from our national resources.

Our motto therefore is ***“TO ACT JUSTLY, TO LOVE TENDERLY AND TO WALK HUMBLLY WITH OUR GOD.”***

How do we use our resources?

- Maximize our E-mails.
- Persist in requesting telephone services to be maintained.
- Pass materials from the Internet to those not connected.
- Use the Mercy Justice Africa Coordinator to disperse what is most suitable.
- Maintain our offices as resource centres.
- In some places the use of postage and DHL are necessary (need to be budgeted for)
- Allow our knowledge to deepen our Faith/Spirituality.
- Simple living and communicating with each other.
- Closing prayer and reflection.

EVALUATION AND CLOSURE

Sr. Anne said that since there was no facilitator the group itself had to choose from among themselves and this proved to be very good. The atmosphere was relaxed, peaceful and there was great teamwork. There was a good balance of formality and informality. There was an obvious commitment to the group from all the participants. Invaluable contribution from the secretary was good. The group was able to carry the

business forward without too much need for facilitation. There was the right balancing in prayer. The group was well aware at all times what the business was to be.

Participation

All were able to participate fully. Important evaluation at that point was good and all the key people were there. The format encouraged full and active participation. Fr. Dolan's input and Wangari's input were extremely helpful. Such input was needed. The fact that at the weekend there was a bigger group gave a different dimension to the conference. It was impressive that so many sisters were available. The question was raised should we have invited lay folk.

The venue was good and many felt at home so much that they went to save the chickens. The materials given were a learning experience. The roles were defined excellently but the diagram presentation was not as clear till when it was explained.

The Mercy Justice Africa needs someone soon.

What are we taking home?

- Debt as it affects the Environment and the family
- HIV/Aids
- Globalisation/ Transnational cooperation and their effects
- Corruption/ empowerment/ people power/God/love/ need to belong/ identity/ collaboration with other group/ new heightened awareness of HIV/AIDS

Should there be another conference?

- Maybe conference is the wrong name. Yes there should be another conference to review where we are at and that could be the work of the Coordinator to visit the countries and see where the needs are. There are many channels of communicating today so use them.
- Country reports were excellent
- Need to look at cost and time
- Need to think of the format of the conference
- Team element/ do we need wider participation or people who can take back the message home
- The value of the conference related to the whole of Mercy life -> Interconnectedness/ and need to send the spirituality of Justice trying to get the justice of stewardship/ Formation/ Community etc.
- What is the best symbol for: -
 - Our Name ~ Mercy Justice Africa
 - Our Logo ~ See the cover of the conference document
 - Our Motto ~ To act Justly, To Love tenderly, and To walk humbly with our God

The best symbol to take home is?

- It is I for I am the greatest symbol for carrying the fire/ the seed to make the necessary happen. E.g. the box of matches has potential energy and only when it is used that we can know the energy stored in it.
- Need for evaluation is important for as St. Augustine's says, "An examined life is not worth living"
- Our Culture always used a story to teach. Remember the story of the girl who was eaten by jiggers. Make it your own. (The story was narrated to the group)

Vote of thanks to Hilary, Breege, Mary, Anne, Suzanne,

Thanks to Breege for affirming us.

Thanks to Winnie for what she has undertaken, to Juliet for the work she did on the preparing our material and the secretarial assistance, thanks to Therese for Justice issues will never die while she is here, to Kathleen and all in the community, and all those who travelled to be at this conference.

We look to the future.

Hopes for the Mercy Justice Africa Office

- *The person to network with others*
- *To coordinate the country justice offices by updating them especially with correct facts and statistics regarding Justice issues.*
- *Animate and encourage the growth of the country justice Office*
- *Constantly call us in the countries to be faithfully to our Mercy Charism/ directives and to Limerick Gathering 2000*
- *Move us forward to developing a mercy Justice spirituality out of which we will acting facilitate/ encourage us to develop theological and pastoral reflections for ourselves as justice people, for our regions/provinces and communities*
- *Funding is important. Connect with agencies or places that have funding available for justice work.*
- *Mobilise the countries/ global areas to act on multinational that cause wide spread distractions in our African countries*
- *Monitor issues that could be controversial or dangerous for us as Mercy sister's e.g. political issues that could endanger us.*
- *Newsletter from Mercy Africa desk to keep the momentum going among us is also necessary*