

Statement from Fraternite Notre Dame
at the 51st Session
of the Commission for Social Development
UN Headquarters, New York City - February 2013

On the occasion of the 51st Session of the Commission for Social Development, Fraternite Notre Dame, founded by His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, thanks you to be allowed to express her point of view.

We cannot speak of Social Development without discussing at the same time on conditions of peace. Nowadays, peace is threatened everywhere in the world. Stable peace has to be grounded on respect towards other religions, the protection of human rights, and ways of life in harmony with the environment. Can people evolve socially on a battle field?

There are currently many armed conflicts going on, and numerous are the governments which slyly foster conflicts between different cultures and religions. If they considered religious and cultural diversity as a valuable asset and patrimony, then they would be in a position to reduce tensions and bring about peace. Violence in our societies reduces the wealth of individuals, families and communities; violence dangerously jeopardizes the social development of every country.

In the United States, a 2003 Report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, already estimated the cost of violence perpetrated by intimate individuals, only for the USA, to over 7.6 billion dollars a year, in health care, immediate medical services and loss in productivity.

In a world where man uses tyranny against man, nature itself becomes the target of his tyranny. Today, more than ever, we must find modes of growth that respect natural resources.

Fraternite Notre Dame, for instance, has contributed in Haiti, in collaboration with agencies such as the WFP, to the economic and social development of a region, by building access roads, thus providing a job to 800 people and wages to the local population, restoring their dignity and fostering mutual aid between families, towards common good. Support from UNICEF also allowed the creation of a school for 500 pupils.

Again, Social development is closely connected with progress on the plane of health, education and the protection of children: three fields that Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik made sure to favor in Niger, a country that numbers among the three poorest in the world.

There, Fraternite Notre Dame opened a clinic to facilitate access to health care for all, free of charge or with modest fees. People in need can benefit from a complete coverage by the clinic. In 2012, the total number of consultations was 12,965.

Fraternite Notre Dame offers outpatient care and follow up to children, in order to keep them in their family units, all the while supporting their nutritional, medical and clothing needs. Fraternite Notre Dame strives to multiply partnerships so as to help widowed or outcast women out of their isolation or deep precariousness.

120 miles from Niamey, by the Malian border, Fraternite Notre Dame intervenes to help an entire village, providing for the population's basic needs, thus protecting them from famine and insecurity.

Education is key to social development; that is the reason why His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik opened a school complex in Niger, welcoming over 700 pupils and notably enabling the schooling of girls, often socially rejected in Niger.

The Social Development of a country is often hindered by a lack of sanitary infrastructures, or the poor state of agriculture. This is the case in Niger, which is confronted to a desert, infertile natural habitat. There is much more to be accomplished, but the example of the progress already made testifies that goodwill can overcome many an obstacle.

Fraternite Notre Dame's Missionaries, after the example of Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik and wherever they happen to work, try to be instruments of peace and unity, by showing the Charity of Christ available to all those who suffer in their body or in their heart.

[End of Statement]