

Written Statement from Fraternite Notre Dame

Preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General

on progress toward achieving the MDGs

Promoting the participation of those living in extreme poverty

Fraternite Notre Dame, founded by His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie Roger Kozik, grants special interest to helping the poor mutually help themselves, in the bosom of her humanitarian missions.

In her actions towards tackling exclusion, Fraternite Notre Dame strives to promote cooperation and solidarity between people who share a common precariousness, thanks to her structures: such as schools, dispensaries and soup kitchens.

In the United States, numerous volunteers who belong to very disfavored neighborhoods assist in serving free meals, or organizing and preparing educational activities to benefit children in need. They help the Nuns, Friars and Priests, in their food assistance distribution programs, pantry bags to families, meals served to the homeless in the streets or the elderly in retirement homes. They participate in national gatherings to promote volunteerism as being instrumental in the betterment of living conditions.

Such recognition of their know-how and usefulness stimulates their action. We are aware how unemployed persons suffer from humiliations. Feeling one is useful is essential to a human being: useful to one's neighbor and to society, lending a hand to realize something is key for a smooth functioning of society. Their participation in Fraternite Notre Dame's activities is for them a recognition and a strong comfort in their trials.

Having a job is both, a right and a duty for men. A State is highly liable, when it leaves men unemployed, or when it replaces men by a machine, without offering them another job instead.

Depriving men of their job destroys and humiliates them. This participation of the poor in food assistance or educational programs favors social relationships. People who are going through precarious circumstances also play a part in the educational activities to benefit children in need who are deprived of family joys: pedagogical field trips; cooking classes and summer camps.

In Niger, Africa, Fraternite Notre Dame has created numerous jobs for persons coming from less favored areas, and helped them recover from social exclusion.

Thus, Fraternite Notre Dame at her orphanage in Niger is training and paying kindergarten aids, to assist orphaned children in their daily activities. Men are also given permanent jobs, which consist in maintaining the classrooms, gardens and compound at the center.

Again, Fraternite Notre Dame offers assistant positions to people who are then employed to help the pupils and upkeep the buildings. All these people come from less-favored rural areas. Recruiting is done through the channels of mutual aid, and by word of mouth.

In Haiti, cooperation between Fraternite Notre Dame and the large UN agencies on road construction projects have allowed providing employment to a thousand poor people, and they have benefited from a salary and food assistance.

Fight against social inequalities can be sustained through a strong cooperation and relationship between NGOs and international agencies such as Unicef, WFP or the IOM, in projects dealing with housing, food assistance, medical care, education and the fight against children's trafficking and labor.

Thanks to such initiatives, the values represented by work, effort, respect for one's homeland, respect for one's elders and mutual aid: these core values which highly contribute to the grandeur of a nation, are once again honored.

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