

# ***How Religious NGOs Engage in the UN System:***

What Advocacy Looks Like in Practice





# WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY **“ADVOCACY”?**

¿QUÉ QUEREMOS  
DECIR CUANDO  
HABLAMOS DE  
**“INCIDENCIA  
POLÍTICA”?**

QU'ENTENDONS-  
NOUS PAR  
**“PLAIDOYER” ?**

Public and/or private **actions that promote** movement toward **justice in our society's** social, economic, and environmental **systems and structures**

(e.g. speaking to/informing a community or their political leaders, writing letters/statements, joining or organizing rallies/demonstrations to address an injustice)



# ROLE of NGOs in the UN SYSTEM

- “Get **in the way**”
- “Get **out of the way**”
- Model **a new “way”**

# **“GETTING *IN* THE WAY”**

**Occupying space in places of power on behalf of those who can't be present** in order to raise awareness of an injustice in progress and to infuse the global conversation with the perspectives, experiences, and needs that would otherwise be absent

- Speaking from the floor of the UN or submitting written statements and recommendations (literally termed "interventions") during major meetings or negotiations
- Writing letters to and seeking meetings with governments' representatives to the UN
- Participating in the political systems of our respective nations (via voting, lobbying, etc.)
- Physically protesting or demonstrating outside UN offices or Member States' missions to the UN

# "GETTING IN THE WAY"



# INTERVENTION FOR FR. STAN SWAMY, SJ

- Jesuit priest held as political prisoner on false charges related to his ministry to Tribal Peoples in India
- Religious in India demonstrated publicly to call for his release
- JCoR petition for his release:
  - Collected 8,864 signatures from individuals, 466 from organizations representing 100 countries and independent territories
  - Sent with letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- OHCHR spoke publicly against the imprisonment and called on Indian government for his release



# ADVOCACY FOR HAITI

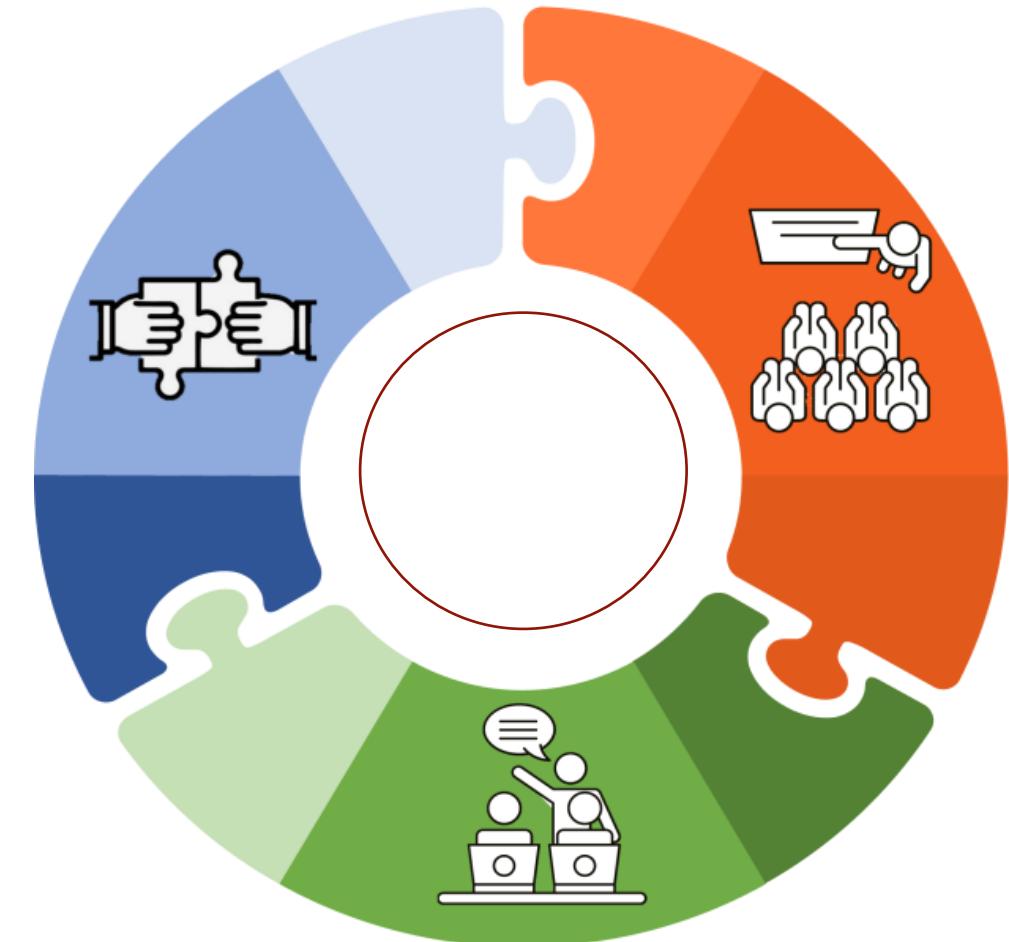
- Initiated by a letter from CLAR leadership expressing serious concern about the increase in violence and political unrest in early 2021
- JCoR representatives at the UN:
  - Developed messages through conversations with our members and partners in Haiti
  - Met with representatives of the governments of Canada, Mexico and Ireland
  - Wrote three letters to the Security Council and the members of the General Assembly Group dedicated to Haiti
  - Joined a public march in New York City calling for support for Haiti
  - Submitted a 17-page report to the Human Rights Council's "Universal Periodic Review" on Haiti
- JCoR network members in Latin America & the USA petitioned their own governments for policies that protect Haitian immigrants from discrimination and deportation and to stop the illegal trafficking of weapons into Haiti



# UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

---

- Each nation's human rights record is reviewed every 4 years by the Human Rights Council
- Civil society has the opportunity to submit reports on our own experiences and observations of human rights violations
- The government receives recommendations; it must report on the measures taken to improve during the next review (4 years later)
- JCoR members have collaborated on reports about Haiti, Brazil, and the United States



# **“GETTING OUT OF THE WAY”**

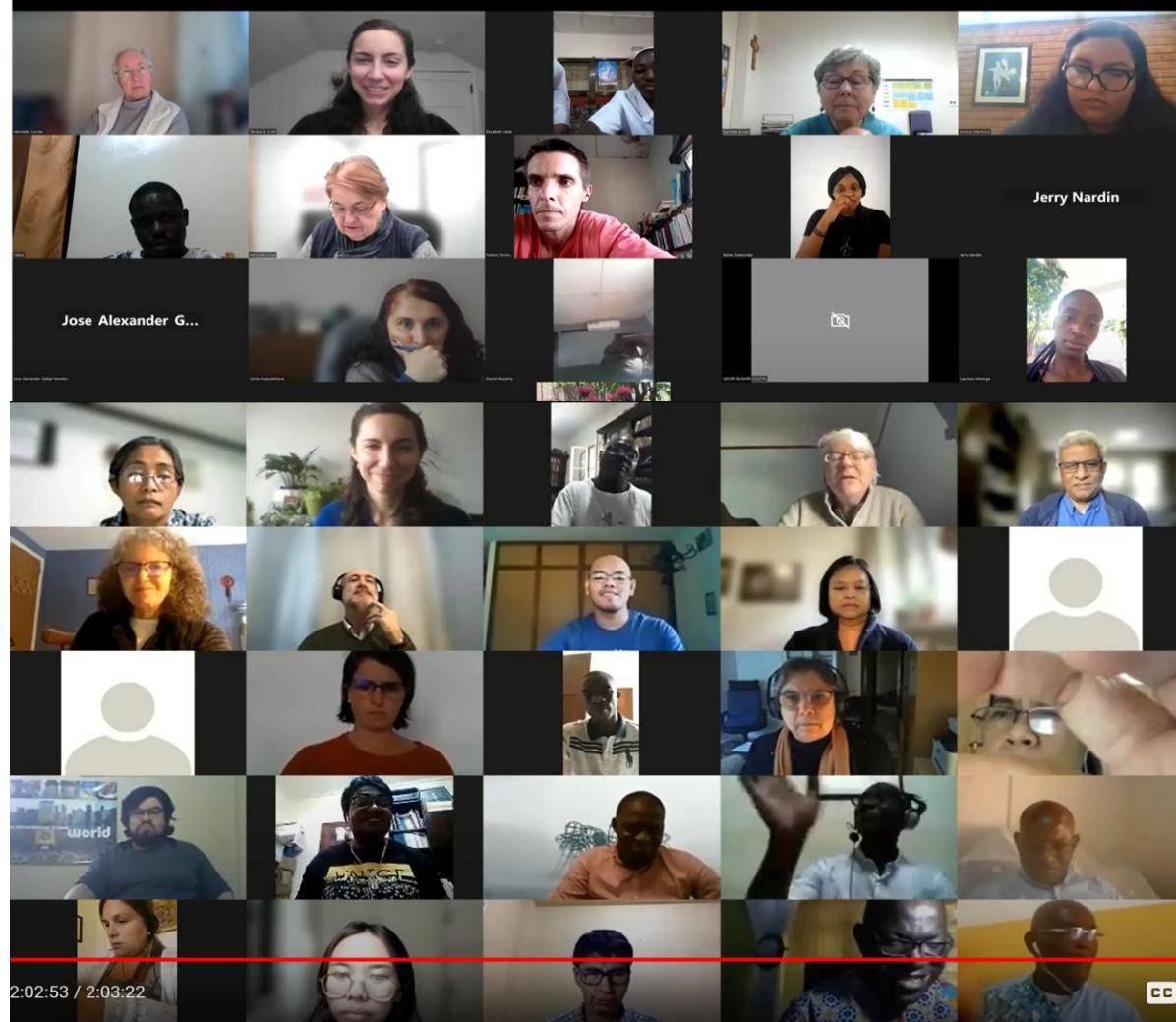
**Creating and giving space within places of power for those who face the greatest barriers to that space so that they can assert their own voices, perspectives, and experiences**

- Organizing events and opportunities for marginalized individuals to speak at the UN
- Providing financial or technological support and training to facilitate marginalized individuals' participation in UN meetings
- Collecting testimony of marginalized groups and submitting it to UN processes and Member States
- Ensuring marginalized groups are aware of the UN's open calls for input through which they can express their concerns and ideas directly
- Amplifying statements of marginalized groups by sharing them with our networks via social media, newsletters, or other platforms



# “DIGITAL DELEGATES’ TRAINING PROGRAMME”

## FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



- Prepares JCoR network members around the world to follow or attend the UN’s annual forum for review of progress toward SDG achievement
- Includes 8 months of virtual training for our members in countries who are submitting SDG progress reports that year (~40 countries per year)
- Supports participants’ participation in their own country’s civil-society review of SDG progress
- Sponsors events during Forum for members to share their perspectives on progress and good practices
- Has enabled two participants to deliver oral statements on behalf of their entire nation’s civil society at UN during HLPF conference

# MODELING A NEW “WAY”

Continually **evaluating our role in unjust systems, modifying our behavior, and telling our stories** to

(a) lessen the burden our actions place on other's ability to access their basic needs and  
(b) demonstrate to political leaders that responsibility can be taken for past harms, genuine collaboration for the common good can be realized, and institutional changes can be made in favor of justice

This work includes making intentional choices about:

- What we buy, wear, and eat
- How much waste we produce and how we dispose of it
- How we travel and how often
- Where we invest our money & whose money we accept (personally and institutionally)
- How we use media and technology
- How willing and adept we are at working with others for a common goal

\*Best **evidence that a new world is feasible—not fantasy!**

# MODELING A “NEW WAY”



United Nations

E/CN.6/2022/NGO/XX



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
December 2021

Original: Language

### Commission on the Status of Women

Sixty-sixth session  
14-25 March 2022

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and  
to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly  
entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and  
peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Casa Generalizia della Societa del Sacro Cuore, Congregation of the Mission, Congregations of St. Joseph, Dominican Leadership Conference, Edmund Rice International Ltd., Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary-Loreto Generalate, International Presentation Association, Loretto Community (Sisters of Loretto), Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Passionists International, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Salesian Missions Inc., Sisters of Charity Federation, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, UNANIMA International, and VIVAT International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/21

# MODELING A NEW “WAY”

*“As members and partners of the Justice Coalition of Religious, a global community of Catholic Sisters, Brothers, priests, and their partners in mission, we uphold a commitment to the care of the natural environment as a foundational principle of our social teaching, our responsibility to one another and to future generations.*

*We also hold firm to our vision of a world in which the equal dignity of all people, women, men, girls, and boys is reflected in the reality governing every nation, community, and family...”*

# MODELING A NEW “WAY”

*The Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy and the Canossian Daughters of Charity Servants of the Poor in India have provided housing and economic support to poor, migrant, and tribal women and girls who had been displaced by cyclones and other environmental disasters.*

*The Canossian Daughters also partnered with other local organisations to assist in the rebuilding of homes destroyed by environmental disasters.*

*In their schools, the Sisters of St. Joseph also encourage girls' leadership and engage men and boys in programmes raising awareness about the harm and falsehood of gender stereotypes.*

