

**Draft 1**

**September 12, 1990**

**PROPOSAL 1990**

Concerning Non-Governmental Status at the United Nations

PREFACE

Please spend time reflecting on the statements in the preface before reading further.

OUR INTERNATIONALITY CHALLENGES US  
TO DEVELOP  
A World Vision and a Sense of Global Responsibility  
TO WITNESS  
Unity in a divided World  
TO DISCOVER  
Unsuspected Ways of Sharing with the Poor  
TO SEARCH  
For New Channels of Service in the Universal Church  
(YAS C 26 and Theme of 1990 EGC)

*Address of Pope John Paul 11 to representatives of Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations October 2, 1979*

No organization, however, not even the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies, can alone solve the global problems which are constantly brought to its attention, if its concerns are not shared by all the people. It is then the privileged task of the non-governmental organizations to help bring these concerns into the communities and the homes of the people, and to bring back to the establishment agencies the priorities and aspirations of the people, so that all the solutions and projects which are envisaged be truly geared to the needs of the human person.

*Address of Robert Miller, former UN Assistant Secretary-General and present Chancellor of the University of Peace, to the Franciscans concerning their NGO status. Please read it, inserting School Sisters of Notre Dame wherever there is a blank.*

This is the plane (spiritual Renaissance) on which the \_\_\_\_\_ can make their greatest contribution to the mission of the United Nations, by proclaiming the centrality, the beauty and the immense riches of spirituality for the healing of the wounds of the world.

There are many groups and people who help the poor, who promote and advocate peace and disarmament, who defend and help save the environment and nature, but rare are those who like the \_\_\_\_\_ have an integral spiritual vision of humanity, of all life, of nature, of our planet and of our place and role in the universe and in time. And very few are those who like the \_\_\_\_\_ open up in front of us the coffer of untold spiritual riches, in contrast to material wealth which none will take along to paradise.

How did you feel when you inserted SSND?

Could we if we were NGOs make this contribution to the mission of the United Nations?

To the mission of Jesus?

## INTRODUCTION

In 1977 the Sixteenth General Chapter received a proposal, that "The Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame seek Non-Governmental Organization status with the United Nations Organization". The General Chapter recommended that "the General Superior and her council study Non-Governmental status of the United Nations with a view to seeking such status." At the 1980 Extended General Council the results of the study were presented and the General Council announced the following decision:

To seek to obtain NGO status in the UN would require that the congregation have attitudinal and real unified support is this issue. We feel that the congregation as a whole cannot give unified support to this issue at this time. Therefore, our decision is that, as a congregation, we will not seek NGO status at the UN.

The General Council stated they made their decision "essentially in view of the whole congregation, and not in view of the objective value of seeking and holding NGO status at the UN".

Ten years have passed since that decision. Two general chapters have promulgated documents: YOU ARE SENT (1982/85) and the DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT (1987). The International Education Seminar published THE WAY TO THE FUTURE (1986). Each document affirms that our internationality is a common and precious value to us. They also state clearly that because we are an international congregation we have global responsibilities. Each document implies in some way that we are to be citizens of the world. YOU ARE SENT states: "As the desire of Jesus, that we be one becomes more fully our own, our striving for unity embraces all humanity and the whole of creation" (YAS C 9).

During these past ten years the United Nations have sought through peaceful means, characterized by mutuality, collaboration and dialogue to resolve world crises. Because of the Gulf crisis a world war could erupt at any moment. Who can rightly judge the motivation for the military build-up of world powers that we are witnessing in the Middle East? Are domination, aggressiveness, control the motives, or peace? Is it possible to resolve this crisis nonviolently? Where is our hope, as we witness the world living in jeopardy? Can hope be found in the United Nations? It has made efforts to dialogue in this crisis and is open to further efforts at peaceful negotiations.

We School Sisters of Notre Dame are called to be concerned about the whole world. We desire our relationship with humanity to be characterized by mutuality, collaboration, dialogue. We recognize a growing interdependence in our world today. We believe in

the call “to join others to find creative ways of building a more just and peaceful world, based on gospel values” (A Way to the Future, pages 12-13). Could involvement with the United Nations be one of the creative ways of building this world? As women of the Gospel, we are challenged to probe the depth of our global responsibilities.

## RATIONALE

BECAUSE association with the United Nations could provide us universal opportunities:

to hope with others about the possibility of “One World” of peace, justice and love

to bring a Christian influence to the United Nations through our orientation rooted in the Gospels and the call of the Churches of the many countries in which our sisters minister

to witness to a Christian concern for peace, justice, economic and social development, and human rights

to collaborate with world religions in bringing our resources, inspirations and ethical values to finding solutions to world problems

to maximize our ability to be a globally responsible congregation

to stimulate global awareness and action among our sisters

to foster responsible concern for humanity and the whole of creation

to share responsibility for changing structures that create and perpetuate poverty

to eradicate the powerlessness and oppression of the economically poor

to strive for the elimination of all forms of discrimination

to promote the development of women and children

to support the right of self-determination for all peoples and nations

URGED BY THE DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT WE PROPOSE that the General Council initiate a process enabling the School Sisters of Notre Dame to seek Non-governmental Organization status at the United Nations.

We further purpose that the status be with the Office of Public Information for three to five years. After three years an evaluation of the status will be made to determine if we should move to a higher status.