



**Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus**


**ENG 30 June 2012**

...to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and promote networking...

## **Narrative**

### **Jesuits at the Rio+20 Conference**

During the week of June 18-22, more than 40 of us Jesuits met together in Rio de Janeiro. Many of us came to attend the annual meeting of the social centers of the Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Others came from Europe, Asia, and Oceania as members of the Ignatian advocacy network on ecology. These latter have been contributing to [Ecojesuit](#), a web page which is the fruit of international collaboration and which is being increasingly well received because of its clarity and rigor.

All of us attended the two parallel conferences on sustainable economy and the climate which were taking place in Rio during these days, namely, the official Rio+20 Conference and the "Summit of the Peoples" Conference, sponsored by grassroots social movements. While the latter conference was held in the city, near Botafogo Beach, in one of the special places of this beautiful city, the official conference was held nearly 40 kilometers outside the city in order to avoid the risks of demonstrations and protests. 

The official conference was a foretold failure. The final document requires no commitments on the part of governments at the international level. Nowadays we know that the problems related to climate change and preservation of the environment can be dealt with effectively, for we possess the resources for doing so. The solutions are expensive, but doing nothing now will involve far greater costs in the future. Not much time is left before we exceed the thresholds which will bring about irreversible changes. As a result, coordinated international action is required. But that is where things become difficult: the governments do not want to commit themselves, especially to any kind of verifiable actions. It is not that the governments are not concerned; to the contrary, almost all of them are taking their particular measures. But they do not want external controls, which they consider invasions of their national sovereignty. On the one hand, the wealthy countries do not want to incur additional expenditures in times of economic crisis, and on the other, the emerging countries are struggling to improve their position in the world economic ranking. All of them seem to feel that they can take their time in dealing with the environment, whose changes occur over the long term.

More interesting than the official gathering was the parallel conference of the Summit of the Peoples. It had more passion and less cool reserve; it had fewer technical resources, but was more lively and people-oriented; it was less artificial and cosmetic, more humble and

real. Nevertheless, the Summit showed clearly that on a global level there is a clamor on the part of communities and groups that are working to protect the climate and the environment. Some communities consist of small peasant farmers and indigenous peoples who are defending their lands and their ways of life from the threats of mining, agro-industrial monoculture, and large-scale development projects. These economic activities effectively displace people and generate misery. Also present at the conference were many environmentally conscious groups of people who are ready to adopt personal and cultural changes which promote a lifestyle that is less aggressive toward the environment and more considerate of the most threatened populations. All participants in the conference made a vigorous call for the creation of a new economy centered on persons, an economy that would reduce inequality and poverty without evoking the myth of growth as the main solution for the problems of humankind.

The greatest hope is found in those conscious, active groups that are multiplying around the world. It is true that we also need the firm commitment of governments and significant changes in the way the economy is organized. But neither the politicians nor those who manage the economy can muster the resources needed for the change. The former suffer from short-ranged vision; the latter answer to nobody but themselves since their only interest is greater profit. In the case of the politicians, only the growing pressure of public opinion will be able to alter their response.

In the coming decades, the future of the planet and the fate of the poor, those who are most threatened, will be decided mainly by the cultural changes - changes of convictions, attitudes, commitments - brought about by global citizens who already share a common problematic and a common destiny. This is a privileged field for the mission of the Society and the Church. There is much that we need to do.

## Flashnews

### **The latest Promotio Iustitiae no. 108 on 'Justice from an Ignatian Perspective' released**



The first complete electronic version of Promotio Iustitiae no. 108 on "Justice from an Ignatian Perspective", brought out in collaboration with Christian Life Community (CLC), has been released on June 15th, on the feast day of Sacred Heart of Jesus. The issue is available for readers on our website and also for easy download in PDF. The articles try to deepen our understanding of justice today within our shared Ignatian perspective. This is done through discernment, reflections on the meaning of justice in different circumstances and through concrete initiatives in mission. [Read more...](#)

### **Buenos Aires - Annual meeting of the Social Coordinators of Latin America**



The annual meeting of the Social Coordinators of CPAL took place June 12-15. Also attending were representatives of the Jesuit Migrant and Refugee Service, the indigenous network, and Fe y Alegría. They were joined as well by representatives from various development cooperation agencies. At the meeting, information was exchanged about the coordinated activities that are taking place at the Conference level, and one whole day was dedicated to delving more deeply into the ecological question. [Read more...](#)

### **Rio de Janeiro - Annual meeting of the network of Social Centers of Latin America**

During this meeting, which took place on June 18-19, there was a review of the programs that are in progress: communications, political advocacy, models of alternative development, political and social formation. Those attending also discussed the difficulties that their centers are experiencing during these times of economic crisis. After the meeting ended, the



coordinators participated in the Summit of the Peoples, along with people from other works of the Society in Rio, especially Fe y Alegría.

### **Rio de Janeiro - Rio+20 Conference**



During the week of June 18-22, more than 40 Jesuits and lay collaborators, along with members of the Christian Life Communities, participated in the events of the official conference, Rio + 20, and the parallel conference of the social movements, the "Summit of the Peoples." They were able to count on the support of the Society's works in Brazil, especially the team of Fe y Alegría. One afternoon they organized an ecumenical prayer service on creation as part of the activities of the Summit. Accompanied by the provincial of Brazil, Carlos Palacios, they also met one morning to dialogue about ecological commitment as a dimension of our mission and our lives. The editors of [EcoJesuit](#), who attended the Conference during those days, sent out a daily bulletin of information on the internet. [Read more...](#)

### **GIAN - Peace and Human Rights Specific Workshop**



GIAN - Peace and Human Rights Network met in Nuremberg between 21 and 24 June 2012. The meeting which drew ten participants from Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa and South Asia was the first specific workshop to be held from among the five networks making up GIAN. The first day was devoted to the already worked out Position paper, strategic paper and internal and external mapping analysis. On the second and third days the group spent on finalizing the specific themes/issues to work on in the coming years. The overarching theme of the network will be "Economic and Gender Justice: Alternative models to basic needs, empowerment and Peace". In terms of concrete action, two conferences each will focus on one sub-theme, namely USA and JESAM will collaborate on efforts aimed to address 'injustices arising out of the Great Lakes region of central Africa', while Latin America and South Asia will work on the issue of 'conflicts around land and minerals with special focus on women'.

### **Nairobi - Meeting of the Social Centers of Africa**



The Social Centers of Africa met in Nairobi on June 25-27, at the convocation of Fr. Rigobert Minani, social apostolate coordinator of the Conference. The meeting was attended by about 40 persons, mostly Jesuits, who came from all the provinces of Africa; in attendance also was Fr. Michael Lewis, president of the Conference. The first day was dedicated to dialogue about the challenges Africa faces as it celebrates 50 years of independence. During the second day the situation and the perspectives of the different social centers were discussed. On the last day those attending the meeting worked in groups on the future challenges facing Africa which need to be addressed by the centers.

### **United States - Jesuits Follow in the Footsteps of Migrants**



On June 14, 2012, a group of Jesuits began a five-week journey along the "migration corridor" from Central America to the United States. Along the way, they have been visiting shelters, human rights organizations and parishes that assist migrants as they move through the migration corridor. On a blog site they've established to chronicle their journey, the Jesuits say they hope to attain "a better understanding of the reality of migration and the difficulties encountered by migrants on their journey to the U.S." The blog, called Journey Moments: The Migrant Corridor, includes photos and a map of the journey and is presented in English and Spanish. [Read more...](#)

## India - Jesuits lead the Campaign for Right to Food and Work in West Bengal



Udayani Social Action Forum of Calcutta Province has been leading the NGO campaign for Right to Food and Work in West Bengal. On June 18<sup>th</sup> they brought together twenty one people's organizations for a workshop and planned a month long campaign in various parts of the state through signature campaigns, poster campaigns and symbolic protest rallies in front of the district administration with the slogan "Tala Kholo -Khabar Dao- Churi Bandhu Karo" (Open the food warehouse - give food - stop stealing). The first of such protests was led by Udayani in South 24 Parganas District on 27 June. 'Right to Food' has been a nationwide campaign demanding the federal government to enact a law to ensure citizens' right to food. [Read more...](#)

## Asia Pacific - JCAP report for 2012 focuses on conference priority



The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific has come out with an annual report for 2012, which contains articles on the four common priority areas across the Conference - Jesuit Formation, the education project in Timor Leste, Environment and Migration. In "A sacred sense of ecology", the report presents the Environmental Way of Proceeding, developed by the JCAP Ecology Task Force as an introduction to the action of reconciliation with creation. On migration, the article "Living with our neighbours" shines the spotlight on Yiutsari, the Jesuit centre for migrant workers in South Korea, as an example of the many local Jesuit works serving migrants in Asia Pacific. [Read more...](#)

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### Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES)

Borgo S. Spirito 4 - 00193 Rome, Italy

Tel: +39-06-6986-8393, Email: [sjes@sicuria.org](mailto:sjes@sicuria.org)

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