



# FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

We are a Franciscan voice at the United Nations, protecting the vulnerable, the forgotten, and our wounded earth.

<http://www.franciscansinternational.org>

## Franciscans on the World Stage: Curbing Abuse, Suffering

by Mary Stronach, OFS  
International Councilor - USA

Through its presence at the United Nations, Franciscans International (FI) performs a vital role for the entire Franciscan Family -- bringing Franciscan values to the global stage and influencing leaders to curb abuse and human suffering.

Such an advocacy presence comes with a cost, especially with staff advocating at three key U.N. offices around the world -- New York, Geneva and Bangkok. FI has been solvent for most of its life, but shortfalls in funding and rising overhead for the past five years led to a mounting deficit. It didn't happen overnight, but a new board of directors, with Secular Franciscan Vice General Minister Doug Clorey as president, recognized a fiscal crisis and decided on a two-pronged course of action:

1. restructure, or "re-dimension" FI, as Doug put it, to slash overhead costs while keeping an effective advocacy presence.
2. issue an urgent appeal for donations to help with the immediate crisis, and plan for stable, on-going funding.

By the end of January 2013, staff was cut from 17 to 5. The higher cost of having its own physical office space was being converted to having a desk at a compatible agency in two of the cities.

U.S. Secular Franciscans responded to last October's appeal, enabling the National Fraternity to contribute more than \$8,500. Also responding were the first orders, the Third Order Regular, and the worldwide Secular Franciscan Order, who all comprise the Conference of the Franciscan Family.

"The appeal to the Franciscan Family has been successful," Doug said in February. "It resulted in significantly reducing the organization's outstanding debts at the end of 2012 and was sufficient to keep FI's ministry at the U.N. alive and active. We're still not 'out of the woods', but in a much better place than we were in October."

He added: "The staff of FI has been cut to a bare minimum and the offices in Bangkok and New York have been replaced with an FI desk in each of these locations. At the moment, we have one advocacy officer in New York, one advocacy officer in Bangkok, and two in Geneva, all managed by a transition manager who will be in place during 2013."

The longer challenge for Franciscans International is "to find sources of funds that are more stable over time," Doug noted. FI and its board is "hoping that, especially Secular Franciscans, will consider donating through 'Five for Francis'." This is an ideal way for Secular Franciscans to donate a small, or large, amount every month that ensures long-term viability for the organization. We have also been encouraging three- and five-year pledges from Franciscan communities and congregations."

Founded in the early 1980s, FI was recognized by the U.N. as a NGO (non-governmental organization) in 1989, and in 1995, received General Consultative Status with the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), allowing it to participate through oral and written statements.



### 5 ways to support Franciscans International

1. Sign up to give \$5 each month
2. Take 5 minutes to visit the FI website at the top of this page.
3. Email the Franciscan Voice e-newsletter to 5 friends
4. Name at least 5 of your Human Rights
5. Ask 5 friends to give 5 for Francis



## Franciscans International Resource

Some of the resources available on the Franciscans International website are a variety of informative publications dealing with important international issues. Below are a few of these downloadable PDF documents.

<http://www.franciscansinternational.org/Publications.82.0.html>

### ***Franciscans International; Seeking Justice through the United Nations***

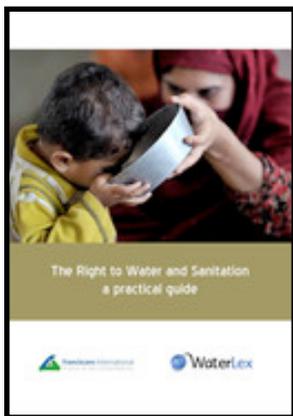
FI Introduction and Reflection Booklet



FI is pleased to release *Franciscans International; Seeking Justice through the United Nations*, a collection of case studies which reflect the variety of human rights challenges that FI addresses through our advocacy at the UN. This booklet serves as an introduction to the work of FI, with first-hand accounts of the experiences of our Franciscan partners at the grassroots around the world and their collaboration with FI in bringing crucial human rights issues to the attention of leaders at the highest international level. We invite readers to consider each case study from both a practical and a spiritual perspective.

This resource offers an excellent introduction to our work, the work of Franciscans defending human rights around the world, and the broader challenges in ensuring human development and social justice. We hope it will challenge you to reflect on the contribution you can make in seeking justice in your community, in your country, and across the world.

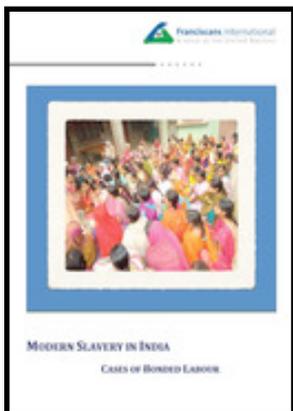
### ***The Right to Water and Sanitation: A Practical Guide***



On 28 July 2010 the United Nations General Assembly officially recognized the Human Right to Water and Sanitation. To help make this Human Right a reality, Franciscans International and WaterLex co-developed a learning manual for grassroots religious communities.

The purpose of this manual is to provide the Franciscan Family and any other interested stakeholders with an overview and some tools to address water access and governance challenges in everyday life. It explains progressively over seven sections how to become aware of water and sanitation challenges as well as the planning of facilitation and advocacy activities at the local, national and international level.

### ***Modern Slavery in India: Cases of Bonded Labour***



Compiled by the FI Advocacy Team, "Modern Slavery in India: Cases of Bonded Labour" features cases of contemporary forms of slavery from the first-hand experience of Franciscans and partners working in India. Examining issues surrounding child labour, prostitution, human trafficking, and forced and bonded labour in industrial and agricultural sectors, this publication serves as a comprehensive introduction to the scourge of contemporary slavery and the challenges we face in eradicating this grave violation of human rights.