



SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT
DE PAUL INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL GENERAL

GLOBAL TRAINING

RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND WITH THE CHURCH





In these fragmented times,
we are only too happy with
everything that can unite us,
and when so many people
take such trouble to hate each
other, should we not try to love
each other?

BLESSED FRÉDÉRIC OZANAM



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THE MAJOR DATES OF OUR ASSOCIATION

Founded on 24 April 1833

Quickly spread throughout the world

Consultative status with UNESCO

Accredited with UN in March 2012

2016 - present in 150 countries



ITS ROLE with references to the Rule

1. To witness to the love of God among the difficulties of the world today and to attract people to Christ who inspires us to offer practical help to the suffering, poor or isolated (Society's Mission Statement)
2. To make the voice of the poor heard in the international context (7.5)
3. To try to eradicate the causes of poverty (7.1, 7.6)
4. To offer aid and sustainable development (7.3)
5. To foster new attitudes of respect and empathy for the weak or those who are different, opposing discrimination of all kinds (7.7)



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THE SOCIETY HAS A PRESENCE AT THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

IN NEW YORK

ECOSOC – Consultative status

Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

IN GENEVA

Human Rights Commission and other UN Agencies

Consultative status

IN PARIS

UNESCO, protecting cultural, and therefore religious rights

Consultative status



ECOSOC, **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

ECOSOC is the United Nations' platform for sustainable development

It maintains close links with civil society, and produces an annual report that offers recommendations to the countries on economic, social and environmental issues

Within ECOSOC, the Society is a member of the “NGO Committee for social development”

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION of the United Nations Organisation is responsible for promoting human rights around the world. It sets rules governing the conduct of States, and also acts as a tribunal at which large and small countries, and non-governmental organisations from the whole world, can have their voice heard.

There are normally 3 sessions every year: decisions are taken at these meetings.

There are several working groups that assist the Commission in its work. The Society belongs to several of these working groups

UNESCO, UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE

UNESCO is committed to building cooperation among nations on subjects other than politics and economics.

The Society takes its rightful place in UNESCO because it defends cultural and therefore also religious rights.

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A VINCENTIAN TRADITION: RELY ON THE HELP OF THE POWERFUL

Keeping good relations with those in power, in order to make the voice of the poor heard

- Saint Vincent de Paul had the help of Anne of Austria, Queen of France
- Frédéric Ozanam sought partnerships with newspapers and with political authorities

WHY BE PRESENT? OTHER REASONS

To create a network, as Ozanam wished
“I want to embrace the world in a network of charity”,
let us create partnerships to “weave charity”

To build a more just society everywhere.
promoting the rights, responsibilities and development of all. ” (The Rule 7.2)

To contribute to “a civilization of love and a culture of life”, (The Rule 7.2)
“Vincentians are committed to promote the right to life from conception to the natural end of earthly life”

To contribute to the coming of the Kingdom of Love and Peace announced by Jesus Christ



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WITHIN THE COUNCIL GENERAL,
THERE IS A “**UN COMMISSION, ECOSOC**”

The members of this Commission have the task:

- To represent the Society at international organizations in New York, Geneva and Paris
- To monitor the sessions and the work of the sessions
- To contribute to the various reports from Commissions
- To collaborate with other NGOs in Catholic networks

WORK WITHIN CATHOLIC NETWORKS

Making the Society's voice heard at the UN requires collaborative effort. There are thousands of NGOs and it is important to attract the attention of the States. It is vital to work within a network.

With other Catholic NGOs the Society belongs to 2 networks

- The CCIC (International Catholic Centre at UNESCO). The Society was a founder member in 1947. Outposts in Paris and Geneva
- The OIC Forum (formerly the International Conference of Catholic Organisations: COIC)

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THREE MAIN PRINCIPLES

- 1. A close relationship with the Church...**
- 2. ...But with considerable autonomy**
- 3. ... respecting Catholic faith and morals**

FIRST PRINCIPLE: A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH...

“The Society is an international Catholic organisation, formed of lay volunteers” that “has a close relationship with the Hierarchy” (The Rule 1.1 and 5.1)

Many Bishops and Priests fully support the Society.
We welcome them as Spiritual Advisors

Our annual reports to the Holy See or to Bishops (the Rule, 5.3) are “*for information only*”, but the Society welcomes an exchange of views, by meeting or correspondence to further improve mutual support and cooperation,



SECOND PRINCIPLE: AUTONOMY

“The Society is legally autonomous, as to its...organisation, rules, activities and internal government. Vincentian freely choose their own officers and manage the Society’s activities and assets” (The Rule 5.2)

The Society has the sole right to decide:

- its work
- its priorities and the way the work is undertaken,
- the management of its projects, Conferences and Councils,
- its choice of officers
- its organisational structures
- the formation and training of its members

It has the sole right to manage and distribute its funds and assets

But we welcome and often accept suggestions for projects from the Hierarchy or from priests who highlight the needs of individuals



THIRD PRINCIPLE: RESPECTING CATHOLIC FAITH AND MORALS

“The Society recognizes the right and duty of the diocesan bishop to confirm that none of its activities is contrary to Catholic faith and morals” (The Rule 5.3)

We will do nothing that is incompatible with Catholic teaching – in our work and projects, our funding of others or receiving funds from others

We accept the policies of the Bishop Conferences for our ecumenical and inter-faith membership and cooperation (6.2 -6.5)



RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN: THE SOCIETY OR ITS PRESIDENT HAS A PRESENCE ON THE FOLLOWING PONTIFICAL COUNCILS

Cor Unum (Federation of initiatives for Christian charity)

The President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a member of this

Collaboration with other Pontifical Councils

Pontifical Council for migrants



THREE IDEAS TO REMEMBER...

Act with other institutions to help change unjust structures or laws that maintain poverty. Do not stand back from today's movement for partnerships and social networks

Vincentians see social justice issues “from the perspective of those they visit who suffer from injustice” (The Rule 7.4)

The Society promotes understanding, cooperation and mutual love among people of different cultures, religions, ethnic origins and social groups, and so contributes to the peace and unity of all peoples (The Rule 7.7)

