

March – April – May 2020

Training Booklet



## The sentinel role of AIC from the local to the international level



## AIC has a sentinel role within international bodies

### Introduction

### Development of the theme

1. Why does the AIC act in international bodies?
2. In which international bodies is AIC present?
3. Topics on the agenda
4. AIC projects recently presented in international organizations

**Group Reflections:** How can you, AIC volunteers, participate in this active role by sending us your experiences, your actions, your dreams?

### Prayer

## Introduction to the topic

"AIC shall have as goals the advancement and development of the underprivileged, the fight against all material, physical, moral and spiritual forms of poverty and suffering" (AIC Constitution, Art. 3 and 4). As an INGO (International Non-Governmental Organization) **several means** are at its disposal:

- \* **Local actions** developed by AIC volunteers, to support destitute people.
- \* **Alerting** local, regional and international authorities about situations of poverty and vulnerability encountered in AIC activities.

We will focus here on the work of the representatives mandated by AIC within international organizations and will answer the following questions:

1. Why does AIC act in international bodies?
2. In which international bodies is AIC present?
3. What are the topics on the agenda?
4. The AIC projects recently presented in international organizations.
5. How you, AIC volunteers, can take part in this guardian role by sending us your experiences, your actions, your dreams.

**AIC representatives bring to international bodies**

**the voice of the 100,000 AIC volunteers**

**and of the thousands of people they support.**

## 1. Foundations of AIC's international action in the fight against poverty:

### **Or, why should AIC combine local and international action in the fight against poverty?**

The objectives of the AIC are to:

- ✓ **Fight against all forms of poverty and exclusion**, through transformative initiatives and projects;
- ✓ **To work with our brothers and sisters** who live in precarious situations by encouraging the discovery of each person's strengths, supporting education in all its forms, and promoting a dignified life.
- ✓ **To denounce injustices**, to bring pressure to bear on decision-makers at all levels, local, national and international.

**AIC follows the example of Saint Vincent and the Social Doctrine of the Church:**

**Saint Vincent** was never afraid to address the decision-makers of his time: Queen Anne of Austria, Cardinal de Richelieu, Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the galleys... all those who had the power to alleviate the suffering of the poorest people.

**The Social Doctrine of the Church:**

The Social Doctrine of the Church proclaims the ever present **truth** of Christ's love. It rests on two basic principles: **unconditional respect for human life and the dignity of each human person**. It developed from the 19th century onwards, to give a Christian response to the realities and questions of the moment.

The fight against poverty finds a strong motivation in the **option - or preferential love - of the Church for the poor**.

In all its social teaching, the Church never tires of recalling some of its other fundamental principles: the first of these is the **universal destination of goods**. By constantly reaffirming the principle of **solidarity**, social doctrine encourages us to take action to promote "the good of each and every one because we are truly responsible for all". The principle of solidarity, especially in the fight against poverty, must always be appropriately associated with the principle of **subsidiarity**, which invites us to leave each person the option to decide for himself what he is capable of doing. Subsidiarity stimulates the spirit of initiative, which is the fundamental basis of all socio-economic development. Attention must be paid to the poor "not as a problem, but as people who can become subjects and protagonists of a new and more humane future for all". John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Peace 2000, 14: AAS 92 (2000) 366.

**On 7 December 2019, Pope Francis**, in receiving the members of the Forum of **Catholic INGOs** in private audience, expressed his interest in **the role of NGOs as an active presence of the Church in the world and in international bodies**. In his address he praised *"the boldness and imagination of the NGOs"*, urging them to always place the dignity of the human being at the centre.

## 2. In which international bodies does the AIC work?

### With Civil Society

The AIC is an INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation) which has representatives in international bodies:

- [ECOSOC](#) – Economic and Social Council of the [UN](#), in New York;
- [UNESCO](#) – United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural and Communication Organization, in Paris;
- [Council of Europe](#), in Strasbourg, France.

### With the Universal Church

AIC is an Association of Lay Faithful recognized by the [Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life](#).

AIC is member of:

- [Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development](#) (for human and Christian promotion)
- [Rome Forum](#) which brings together Catholic-inspired NGOs
- [Catholic Centers within international organizations](#): in Paris the CCIC, in Strasbourg the CINGO.
- [Crescendo](#) - Network for Human and Christian Ageing
- [The Vincentian Family](#)

### ➔ With Civil Society



The United Nations organization, the **UN**, is the international institution that brings together the largest number of countries (193). The UN was created after the Second World War in 1945 with the aim of maintaining international peace and security. In particular, by adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, it established an international framework for the recognition of the fundamental rights of all human beings without distinction.

The current agenda of the UN and its agencies is **Agenda 2030**, which includes 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs).



As was pointed out at our last AIC International Assembly in 2017, they coincide with the main lines of the Encyclical 'Laudato Si' proclaimed by Pope Francis.

The **UN** has 5 main organs:

- [The General Assembly](#): 193 members
- [The Security Council](#): 15 members
- [The Economic and Social Council - ECOSOC](#): 54 members elected by thirds for 3 years
- [The International Court of Justice](#) sitting in The Hague, The Netherlands
- [The Secretariat](#)

The UN has created various agencies, in particular **UNESCO**.

### a) AIC at **ECOSOC**, in New York:



ECOSOC is the Economic and Social Council of the UN.

Since 2003 AIC has had special consultative status as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with **ECOSOC**.

AIC representatives participate in commissions and events related to **poverty, women and children, climate change and the environment**.

The AIC representatives have membership on and participate actively with:

- UN Working Group to End Homelessness: <http://www.unngoendhomelessness.com>
- NGO Committee on Social Development: <https://ngosocdev.org>
- NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York: <https://ngocsw.org>
- Vincentian Family Coalition at the UN

In addition, AIC participates in the activities of:

- High-level Political Forums of the General Assembly
- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)



MaryAnn Dantuono - Natalie Boone, AIC USA

#### Moments in AIC's history of participation at the UN:

- **2013** – **ECOSOC** approves a Statement addressed by AIC to the Committee on the Status of Women, making education of children up to the age of 16 compulsory.
- **2015** – AIC joins other NGOs of the Vincentian family present at the UN in New York (Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity, Federation of Sisters of Charity, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul) to form a coalition (VFUNNY).
- **2017** – VFUNNY forms the working group to "**end homelessness**", in response to the call of the Vincentian Family on this issue. Currently 60 NGOs are involved.
- **2017** – VFUNNY organizes a side-event at the Commission on Social Development on the theme: "The three pillars of poverty eradication: grassroots engagement, advocacy and systemic change".



- **2020** – AIC addresses a civil society statement to the Commission for Social Development on behalf of the WGEH (United Nation's Working Group to End Homelessness). This statement was the document that the UN member countries used as the framework for their negotiations during the Commission.

## b) AIC at UNESCO, in Paris



L'UNESCO is the UN agency for education, science and culture. UNESCO was founded in 1945, when the UN was created. It has 193 member states. "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO Constitution).

AIC has had the status of official NGO partner of UNESCO since 2003.



Isabelle Chaperon, Laurence de la Brosse, Marie Claude Dumont, AIC France.

UNESCO is particularly responsible for the implementation of **SDG 4: "Quality Education for All"**, but is working on almost all the SDGs. Its current priorities are the **African continent** and **girls and women** (gender equality).

Currently about 400 NGOs are accredited to UNESCO and form the International Conference of NGOs (ICNGO), which is led by the Liaison Committee.

Most of AIC's work is done with the Liaison Committee or during the ICNG:

- During international forums, preparation and participation: "**Sciences, the common good of humanity**" in Moscow in 2018; "**Another look at migration**" in Tunis in 2018; "**Challenging inequalities**" in Paris in 2019. A forum on "**Global Citizenship**" is planned for 2020.
- On international days such as the International Day of the Girl Child by the "**Voices of Girls**" group led by AIC in 2018 and 2020.
- Or by speaking at various events, during the International Conference of NGOs in December 2018, or during the side-event of the 2019 General Conference.



## With the CCIC– UNESCO network



The International Catholic Cooperation Centre for UNESCO, **CCIC–UNESCO**, created by the future Pope John XXIII at the same time as UNESCO, is a platform of INGOs of Catholic inspiration, which acts as a think tank of ideas, reflection and proposals to UNESCO.

The AIC is a member and sits on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. AIC helps to prepare analyses of certain UNESCO documents and statements or communications to the sector concerned or to the Director-General. Examples: critical analysis of the book "International Guidelines for Sexuality Education" which is addressed to state governments to elaborate their educational programme; comments and recommendations of the CCIC addressed to the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) on the draft report "MAP and Parenthood"; contribution to the "Global Education Monitoring report 2021" (GEM) on the role of non-governmental actors in education.

CCIC participates in Pope Francis' major project "**Reconstructing the Global Education Pact**" and in UNESCO's "**The Future of Education - Learning to Become**", two initiatives that place education at the heart of issues where it is important to make our experience and convictions heard.

AIC participates in the piloting of the forum organized by CCIC for November 2020 at UNESCO on the paths for education in a world dominated by new technologies, and in the organization of reflection meetings in connection with the Global Education Pact project.

Participation in this platform makes the work of Catholic NGOs at UNESCO visible and, above all, more effective.

### c) AIC at the **Council of Europe**, in Strasbourg (France)



**The Council of Europe** is an intergovernmental organization established in 1949. It brings together 47 member states that have previously signed the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe consists of 7 main organs:

- The Committee of Ministers
- The Parliamentary Assembly
- The European Court of Human Rights
- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- The Commissioner for Human Rights
- **The Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations**
- The Secretary General





The AIC was granted consultative status with the Council of Europe in 1990. Since 2005, it has had participatory status.

The NGOs enjoying participatory status constitute the **Conference of INGOs** which is a member of the Council of Europe quadrilogue (Committee of Ministers; Parliamentary Assembly; Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; Conference of INGOs). The NGOs undertake in particular to:

- Promote respect for the conventions and all the legal instruments of the Council of Europe in member countries.
- Contribute to the implementation of Council of Europe standards and policies in co-operation with local, regional and national NGOs.
- Participate actively in the sessions and work of the Conference of INGOs.
- Give maximum publicity to Council of Europe initiatives and achievements in the field(s) of their competence.

The Conference of INGOs adopted a **Plan of Action 2018-2021** structured around 3 themes: **Human Rights; Education and Culture; Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges.**

AIC participates in the following Working Groups:

- **Poverty:** inequalities and the enjoyment of rights which celebrates the day on October 17th around one theme (2019: 'Poverty and the rights of the child').
- **Social and territorial cohesion:** reducing social and territorial fractures, taking into account human rights in the treatment of climate risks.
- **Lifelong learning.** Objective: recommendations to Member States on a reference framework for adult education.

In 2019, AIC contributed to the elaboration of recommendations:

- ✓ On climate change, migration and human rights
- ✓ On the future of the Council of Europe: civil society gets involved
- ✓ On the right to adequate housing for all
- ✓ On student poverty and precariousness in Europe



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

AIC is a member of **CINGO** (Christian Inspired NGO), which meets 3-4 times a year with the participation of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe.

AIC took part in the Colloquy "Building Europe together - 50 years of the Holy See at the Council of Europe".

## ➔ With the Universal Church



**The Forum of Rome** brings together about one hundred Catholic-inspired international NGOs active in advocacy with international institutions around the world. It is a non-hierarchical forum for discussion, reflection and exchange, which allows the experiences and know-how of the various NGOs and dicasteries to be pooled and gives a harmonious image of the Church's action.

The lines of reflection of the Rome Forum are: human rights, development, health, education, family, migration, youth, Christian anthropology, integral human ecology.

Since December 2017, AIC has actively participated in the reflection on **inclusion** and in the elaboration of a document in particular in the field of **education**, insisting on the informal aspects of education (outside school), vocational and lifelong training, as well as on the need for education in affective and sexual life respectful of the person in all his or her human dignity.



### 3. What are the current working themes of international organizations?

**Or, in which areas can we act in international organizations, by bringing our grassroots AIC experience?**

*Formal and informal education at all stages of life, sex education*

***Literacy***

***Human rights and basic needs: access to social protection, health care, clean water.***

***Equality Male-Female; Boy-Girl***

***Homelessness and access to housing, more specifically for women/girls***

***Trafficking in human beings***

***Ageing and the elderly***

***Global Citizenship***

***Inclusion of all in society***

***Ecology, sustainable development and human development***

***The ethical issue in the development of artificial intelligence***

### 4. List of AIC actions recently presented in international bodies

At UNESCO, in October 2018, for Girls' Day: Projects from AIC Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, El Salvador, Madagascar, Mexico, Philippines, Ukraine, as well as the testimonies of young girls collected thanks to AIC volunteers from these countries.

At UNESCO, in January 2020, for the Global Education Monitoring report 2021 (GEM 2021): Projects from AIC Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Madagascar, Mexico, Philippines.

**You too can take part in AIC's sentinel role!**

**By informing the AIC International Secretariat of your grassroots actions, together we can build a fairer society for all.**

## AIC's suggestions for group reflection

1

What are the key words of the international organizations that you find in your initiatives?

2

If your AIC initiatives meets one or more of these keywords, please fill in the AIC action form - attached - and send it back to the Secretariat:  
[info@aic-international.org](mailto:info@aic-international.org)

3

The theme of the AIC 2020 International Assembly in Bogotá is:  
"Peace and freedom in a sustainable world".  
How do you think your AIC action contributes to building peace?

## Prayer

### First letter of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy, 2, 1 - 8

1 - I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 - For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 - For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 - Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 - For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 - Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

7 - Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 - I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.