

Franciscan Sisters of the Poor Foundation Calls for Commitment to Social Justice

NEW YORK, NY--(Marketwire - February 18, 2010) - The Franciscan Sisters of the Poor Foundation has issued a call to action on February 20th, World Social Justice Day, in recognition of the United Nation's efforts to awaken public conscience to worldwide social inequities. Executive Director Linda Christian urged cooperation with and support for the NGOs working with the UN to achieve social well-being and justice for all people.

"Deprivation, racial and ethnic discrimination are at the core of much social injustice in today's world," said Christian. "Many do not have freedom of movement. They are not permitted to enter places of worship or to freely associate with other citizens. In some parts of the world, children are forced into slave labor in sweat shops; 'street kids' scavenge for food in order to survive; and young girls and women often are victims of kidnapping prostitution groups. This is not acceptable. We must all pull together to become agents of change."

The United Nations adopted the Eradication of Poverty as its #1 Millennium Development Goal. It launched the World Day of Social Justice in 2009, calling for consolidated support from the international community. The UN Commission on Social Development, comprised of Ambassadors and representatives of NGOs, confers during the month of February on relevant issues. Social Integration is a focus for this year's meeting. Franciscans International, the NGO of the Franciscan Family, which includes the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, is represented in these discussions.

"Poverty is not an accident. Poverty transfers from generation to generation due to the unjust economic circumstances that continue to widen the gap between rich and poor," said Sister Bernadette Sullivan, SFP. "In a just society, we are all entitled to the same basic human rights. When people do not have access to education, to sustainable employment, to food and shelter, and to a voice in the policies that affect their human rights, they become invisible. The Franciscan Sisters of the Poor seek changes in the unjust international systems that oppress the poorest among us, but we all share a responsibility to ensure that everyone is welcome at the Table. *'Social Justice is everybody's Business!'*"

A new documentary, *The End of Poverty*, was recently released at the UN and at the Cannes Film Festival. The trailer may be viewed on www.apple.com/trailers/independent/theendofpoverty

An international, multi-cultural congregation, the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor work on the streets among the poorest of the poor. Through more than 25 programs on four continents, the Sisters shelter, heal, and educate. They train young people to become self-

sufficient, and they affirm the dignity and human rights of each person, transforming lives, one life at a time.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Poor Foundation is a principle source of funding and support for the Sisters' efforts in marginalized societies around the world.

For more information on the work of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor please contact the office of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor Foundation: 212-818-1987, or visit our website: www.franciscanfoundation.org.