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School Sisters of Notre Dame delegation to participate in UN Commission on Status of Women

An international delegation from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, including students from SSND schools in Austria, Brazil, Japan and the United States, will attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women meeting March 12-23 in New York as they address the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

In addition to the priority theme on the empowerment of rural women and girls, the CSW will evaluate progress on participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies (ICTs) and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women. The CSW also will discuss emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, including equality between women and men.

Member states, as well as representatives of United Nations entities and of non-governmental organizations such as the School Sisters of Notre Dame, will participate in the two-week session.

“This year’s theme is especially relevant to us because we have always seen our mission as a call to meet urgent needs not met by other,” said Sister Eileen Reilly, SSND, director of the SSND UN-NGO Office. Additionally, as the U.N. focuses on ‘Leaving No One Behind,’ we believe that rural women and girls are too often among those who are left behind.”

As a registered NGO (non-governmental organization) with the U.N. Department of Public Information since 1993, the School Sisters of Notre Dame also have Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, which provides them with the opportunity to submit statements for consideration by the U.N. secretary general and the CSW. Past statements have reflected the SSND commitment to ensure that girls have a place at the table and a voice during these deliberations.

This year’s SSND delegation demonstrates that commitment. High school and college students have a unique role to play in reminding participants that girls must not be forgotten in the push for gender equality, and the SSNDs have been sponsoring high school or college students at CSW meetings for more than 10 years.

“The intersection of the priority theme of rural women and girls, who can be some of the most isolated people, and the review theme of access to media and ICTs gives us all opportunities to learn and share about some the best practices in empowering rural women and girls,” Sister Eileen said.

In addition to Sister Eileen, the SSND delegation for the first week of the two-week CSW session will include Sister Carolyn Jost, SSND, of Brookfield, Illinois; and participants from Firesgasse School in Vienna, Austria; Notre Dame Jogakuin High School, in Kyoto, Japan; Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore, Maryland; and three SSND-sponsored schools in Brazil.

SSND-sponsored Mount Mary University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, also will be sending a delegation to the CSW. Those participants will include Sister Zipporah Marigwa, SSND; Professor Julie Tatlock; and eight students.

The congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame is an international community of women religious. The sisters educate with a world vision believing that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. The sisters and their colleagues seek to empower women, youth and persons who are poor or marginalized and strive to change systems of poverty and injustice. Approximately 2,500 SSNDs minister in 32 countries.

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Additional information about the CSW is available at: www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw62-2018

SSND reports from the CWS will be available at: www.ssnd.org

For more information about the School Sisters of Notre Dame, please visit:

www.gerhardinger.org or www.ssnd.org