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### **School Sisters of Notre Dame delegation to participate in UN DPI/NGO Conference**

A delegation from the School Sisters of Notre Dame will attend the United Nations 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) May 30-June 1 in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, where they will focus on creating and strengthening global partnerships in support of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The theme of the conference, “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together,” comes at an opportune time, said Sister Eileen Reilly, director of the SSND UN-NGO office. The implementation of the new SDGs is just beginning.

“As we SSNDs look at this worldwide project, we naturally turn to Goal 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” Sister Eileen said. “We are hoping that our participation in this conference with more than 1,800 delegates from around the world will give us a deeper understanding of what it means to educate for global citizenship in our divided world.”

In addition to Sister Eileen, the SSND delegation includes Sister Gloria Hirai, of Japan, and Sister Lourdes Pangelinan, of Guam. During the conference, they and other participants will be able to engage members of civil society, diplomats, United Nations officials, policy experts, scientists, educators, businesses, trade unions, parliamentarians, local authorities and others from around the world in discussing key issues. The SSNDs welcome the opportunity to mingle and learn from the variety of delegates who will be present, Sister Eileen said.



“Throughout the SDGs, there are several calls for ensuring that women and girls are an integral part of the development that is being called for,” Sister Eileen said. “In the SSND constitution, when the history of the congregation is described, we read that the ‘first concern was for poor girls in small towns and villages.’ That understanding continues to this day and we hope to learn new ways to act on that concern.”

The conference is organized in cooperation with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, the NGO community, the Government of the Republic of Korea and the National Organizing Committee of Korea. This is the first year that the NGO/DPI conference has been held in Asia.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has been a registered NGO with the U.N. Department of Public Information since 1993. In 1998, SSND received special consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

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 UN DPI/NGO Conference is available at:

<http://outreach.un.org/ngorelations/conference-2016/>

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

[www.gerhardinger.org](http://www.gerhardinger.org) or [www.ssnd.org](http://www.ssnd.org)