



Fr. José Rodríguez Carballo
Ministro Generale OFM
Curia Generalizia
Via S. Maria Mediatrix, 25
00165 Roma
tel.: +39 - 0668.49.19
Fax: +39 - 0663.80.292

Fr. Marco Tasca
Ministro Generale OFMConv.
Curia Generalizia
Piazza Ss. Apostoli, 51
00187 Roma
tel.: +39 - 06699.571
fax: +39 - 06699.57321

Fr. Mauro Jöhri
Ministro Generale OFMConv.
Curia Generalizia
Via Piemonte, 70
00187 Roma
tel.: +39 - 064620.121
fax: +39 - 064620.1210

Fr. Michael Higgins
Ministro Generale TOR
Curia Generalizia
Via dei Fori Imperiali, 1
00186 Roma
tel.: +39 - 066920441
fax: +39 - 06678.4970

Encarnación del Pozo
Ministro Generale OFS
C/Alenza 8-5° A
28003 Madrid
tel e fax: +34-91-5340990

Fr. James Puglisi
Presidente CIF-TOR
Curia Generalizia
Piazza Sant'Onofrio, 2
00165 ROMA
tel: +39 - 0645443109
fax: +39 - 066893404

Conference of the Franciscan Family

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Peace and all Good!

Over the past 25 years, with your support, a dream has become a reality. Franciscans International (FI) has become a collaborative initiative of the whole Franciscan Family. Through its ministry FI is continuing St. Francis's legacy of challenging leaders, as he did with his "Letter to the Rulers." Today, FI is our united letter to the rulers, urging them to abandon injustice and promote peace, respect, and care for creation.

FI's ministry is to bring the voice of the Franciscan grassroots and those whom we serve to the United Nations (UN). In addition, FI provides formational trainings to Franciscans on topics of human rights, poverty, peace-building, and the environment, with the aim of empowering participants with skills with which to make change happen. We would like to encourage all of you to take advantage of the resources and assistance FI offers to you. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the FI offices in Bangkok, Geneva, or New York to share your concerns, challenges, needs and any information that could be used at the UN.

Two years ago a new human rights mechanism called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was established. The UPR allows FI to submit reports to the Human Rights Council during the review of its 192 member states. Every state is reviewed over a four year period. So far FI has been able to submit reports for 13 countries (please see enclosed sheet), using statistics and information from Franciscans in the field. This programme has shown great potential for FI to influence the international community with the voice of the Franciscan family, speaking on issues effecting the most vulnerable.

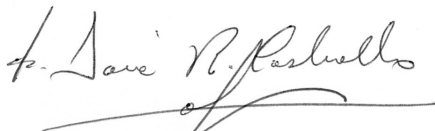
To learn more about FI and how to make use of this important resource, please visit: www.franciscansinternational.org. We strongly recommend you read FI's 2008 annual report on line, which is available in French, German, Italian, Spanish and English

The Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) is very proud of FI's accomplishments and its wonderful expression of Franciscan solidarity—a collaboration of all the orders and congregations of the Franciscan family, together with the Anglican Franciscan family. We are confident of FI's commitment and viability. We fully endorse its mission to bring about systemic change to improve the lives of our brothers and sisters who are suffering, oppressed, and vulnerable.

We encourage you to become more familiar with the opportunities available to you through FI and to help and facilitate our common mission to be a voice for the voiceless. We, likewise, request your financial support for this collaborative ministry of the whole Franciscan Family.

May God bless our work on behalf the poor and marginalized.

The Members of the Conference of the Franciscan Family



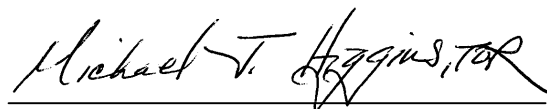
Fr. José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM
Minister General



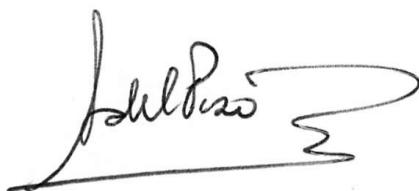
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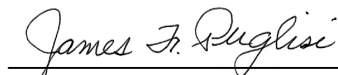
Fr. Mauro Jöhri, OFMCap
Minister General



Fr. Michael Higgins, TOR
Minister General



Encarnación del Pozo, OFS
Minister General



Fr. James Puglisi, SA
President CIF-TOR

List of countries and topics which Franciscans International has intervened during the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations:

- Benin: Right to food, right to health, right to education and “witch” children (infanticide);
- Burkina Faso: Right to food, right to education, trafficking;
- Burundi: Peace-building, women’s rights, right to education, right to food, internally displaced persons, administration of justice, detention facilities, millennium development goals;
- Cameroon: Right to education, right to health, forced marriage, child labour, trafficking of children, justice for minors;
- Canada: Discrimination of poor, right to water, trafficking, migrant rights, asylum seekers;
- Ivory Coast: Right to education, freedom of movement, extreme poverty, right to food, right to work, right to healthy environment, exploitation of women domestic workers, impunity;
- Guatemala: Violence against children and young people;
- Indonesia: Torture, police violence, human rights of West Papua inhabitants;
- Portugal: Trafficking; rights of persons with disabilities, domestic violence;
- Democratic Republic of Congo: Women’s rights, rights of the child (street children and child soldiers), humanitarian situation, right to health, access to justice;
- Slovakia: Discrimination against minorities (Roma people);
- Vanuatu: Right to education;
- Zambia: Right to education, HIV and AIDS, street children, exploitation of natural resources.