

Draft speech

3 minutes

Monday, January 12, 2024

Institutional message from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

*Madam President,
Distinguished delegates from the countries,
Distinguished representatives of civil society.*

Good afternoon.

My name is RENATO LIMA DE OLIVEIRA and I represent the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the United Nations.

It is a great honor and an immense privilege to participate in the annual session of the Commission for Social Development.

We are very pleased to be able to contribute to the United Nations in tackling extreme poverty and hunger.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic institution, made up of 800,000 volunteer members, present in 155 countries.

We know like no one else the exclusionary reality that affects the most vulnerable. We are close to them on a daily basis, especially during the home visits we make.

We are a truly "army of charity" in this war against poverty, hunger and hopelessness.

Our organization is also part of the **International Vincentian Family**, acting collectively to achieve more effective results for those in need.

We have no doubt that the solution to this disastrous situation lies in two areas: **education** and **employment**.

There also needs to be a **new generation of politicians**, really committed to the common good, to implement the public policies that will transform society.

All the speeches I've heard here over the last few days have been very inspiring, but they need to get off the drawing board and into action.

What really makes a difference to people's lives are concrete actions, efficient strategies and social projects that generate income.

As our main founder, Antoine-Frederick Ozanam, used to say: "We must not only alleviate the consequences of misery, but above all identify its causes".

Our goal is to defend a **culture of peace**, a **culture of universal fraternity** and a **culture of empathy**, all based on Gospel values, Vincentian virtues, and social justice.

Every child of God has the right to a dignified, prosperous, decent, and stable life.

May we continue together, "serving in hope", in the path for a fairer, more generous, more fraternal, and less unequal world.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Renato Lima de Oliveira
SSVP