

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
An NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, UN



60 East 42nd Street,
New York,
New York 10165

Tel No: 1 2125992711
Cell No: 1 9178681843

website: <http://www.buonpastoreint.org/jp>

September 11, 2015

H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the United Nations General Assembly 69th Session,
United Nations.
New York.

Your Excellency,

We are writing on behalf of The Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status with the United Nations' ECOSOC.

It is with a sense of dismay that we read that Mr. Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International has been selected as the keynote speaker during the 25th September opening plenary of the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 on behalf of CSOs. The dismay results from the recent controversy over the adoption on August 11, 2015 of a [resolution](#) recommending that Amnesty International develop a policy that supports the full decriminalization of all aspects of prostitution or what Amnesty International calls "sex work."

While we welcome the decriminalization of all women engaged in prostitution and the protection of their human rights, we note that this resolution fosters the decriminalization of the 'commercial sex industry' that includes pimps, brothel owners and buyers of sex, who are the main perpetrators of violence and abuse against those in prostitution. Prostitution is not 'decent work' and is rather a denial of the dignity and worth of every woman and girl. Prostitution is a continuation of a patriarchal system, a form of slavery, and violence against women. The existence of the 'sex industry' is one of the root causes of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Amnesty International's proposed framework to decriminalize pimps, brothel owners and buyers of sex is in direct violation of the 1949 Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, CEDAW, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is regrettable that your selection of Mr. Salil Shetty as the keynote speaker was made at this time. During the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa (July 2015) CSOs expressed concern about the strong tendency towards the instrumentalization and commodification of women

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in the economy and the market place. This Resolution proposed by Amnesty International is in direct opposition to the United Nations aspiration to leave no woman or girl behind in our collective quest to achieve gender equality. Amnesty International's resolution in effect is endorsing male demand for 'sex' and ensuring the availability of a supply of women framing the argument within a distorted Human Rights Framework.

At this moment in history with the launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals encouraging Member States to invest in tackling inequalities and empowering women and girls, the selection of Mr. Salil Shetty as keynote speaker couches the language of human rights for all women in an unacceptable way obstructing true gender equality and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Thanking you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Winifred Doherty". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Winifred Doherty
Chief Administrative Officer
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

CC
Suzan Alzner, Officer in Charge
UN_NGLS,
United Nations Building DC1, Room 1106
New York NY 10017, United States

Lotta Tahtinen, Stakeholder Engagement Programme Coordinator
Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
United Nations Secretariat Building
405 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017

Endorsed by the following Organizations with Special Consultative Status

1. Coalition Against Trafficking in Women
2. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
3. Dominican Leadership Conference
4. International Presentation Association
5. National Board of Catholic Women of England and Wales
6. Passionists International
7. School Sisters of Notre Dame
8. Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
9. Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries -
10. Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland
11. Swedish Women's Lobby

“Our commitment to reconciliation demands that we promote justice and peace...”

12. Widows for Peace Through Democracy (WPD) ECOSOC roster status

International, Regional and National Organizations and Groups

13. ASSOCIAZIONE IROKO ONLUS – Stella Lisi

14. SPACE International – Rachel Moran

15. Designada Regional para América Latina y el Caribe-OIJPBP – Marta Iris

16. European Women Lawyers Association – Jackie Jones (President)

17. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd – Province of Ireland – Ethna McDermott.

18. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd – Province of New York – Ellen Kelly

19. Handcrafting Justice Inc. (USA) Maureen McGowan

20. Les Champs de Booz (Prevention of Trafficking) – Association - Marie Helene Halligon

21. Mercy International Association – Global Action - Denise Boyle

22. Resist Porn Culture - Feminism in London - Lisa-Marie Taylor

23. Resistenza Femminista, Italy – Chiara Carpita

24. Sex Trade 101 - Bridget Perrier and Natasha Falle, Co-founders

25. Survivors for Solutions - Autumn Burris, Founding Director

26. Wales Assembly of Women – Jackie Jones

27. Women@thewell - National Charity –UK - Lynda Dearlove

Individual Signatures

28. Caroljean Willie, SC, Ph.D. EarthConnection