



2023

**Annual
Report**

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear FRIENDS,

We are pleased to present to you the report of Dominicans for Justice and Peace which represents the work of our brothers and sisters who are present at the United Nations in Geneva, Nairobi, and Vienna.

This year 2024, we celebrate the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas, an eminent Dominican known as the Angelic Doctor. Two years ago, Pope Francis told the participants of the Thomistic Congress: “Go to Thomas!” and he encouraged them to promote a living Thomism whose vitality is grounded in its “systolic and diastolic” movements. “Systolic, because there is a need to focus on the study of the work of Saint Thomas in its historical and cultural context, to identify the structural principles and to grasp their originality. Then, however, there is the diastolic movement: to address today’s world in dialogue, to assimilate critically what is true and right in the culture of the time.”



While Aquinas did not explicitly write about human rights as we understand them today, he wrote on various fundamental aspects of human dignity and justice. Aquinas taught that human dignity is grounded on the Christian teaching that human beings are created in the image of God (imago Dei). This tenet underscores the intrinsic worth of every person, a key principle in the concept of the universality of human rights. He believed that there is a natural law discoverable by reason which is universal, and therefore applies to all human beings regardless of their cultural or religious background.

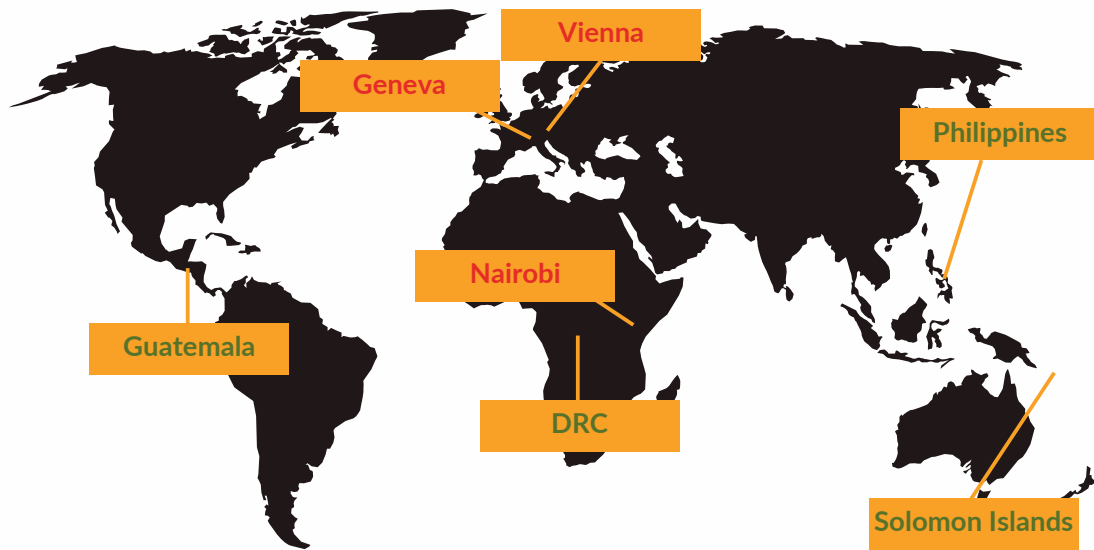
We also celebrate this year the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Francisco de Vitoria’s teaching career in Salamanca. De Vitoria applied Thomistic principles and taught that the indigenous peoples of the Americas had rights to their lands and self-governance. He opposed the view that they could be subjugated merely because they were non-Christians, or perceived as “uncivilized”. In dialogue with his missionary confreres in the Americas, de Vitoria laid the groundwork for modern concepts of international law by asserting that there are laws governing the conduct of nations, based on natural law. He proffered the idea of a community of nations bound by common legal principles. For this reason, he is acknowledged as the “father of international law”. The United Nations honor his contribution by naming a big hall at the UN in Geneva salle de Vitoria.

This is the tradition which Dominicans for Justice and Peace carries on at the UN today. As you can see in the following pages, it is a huge task which fr. Aniedi Okure, OP, our dedicated representative at the UN, and his team cannot sustain without your support.

Sincerely in Christ,

FR. GERARD FRANCISCO TIMONER III, OP
PRESIDENT

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



Offices

Countries of focus



STATEMENTS

Philippines, Guatemala, DRC, Mexico, Haiti, impacts of Covid-19 on the right to education, sugar reform, organised crime, and plastic pollution



JOINT REPORTS

- Universal Periodic Review of Dominican Republic on the human rights of migrants of haitian nationality and persons of haitian descent;
- Key findings of October 2022 Community visits: The impacts of logging on human rights in Solomon Islands;
- Women's rights in Solomon Islands (Submitted to the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women);
- Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria



EVENTS

- Faith-based engagement and climate advocacy; reflections on COP27 and anticipating COP28;
- HRC53 Side event: Challenges on the legal protection of climate-induced displacement: sharing grassroots' perspective;
- Interfaith Talanoa Dialogue at COP 28



PEOPLE TRAINED

From the Philippines and Venezuela

MILESTONES IN 2023

WORKSHOPS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dominicans for Justice and Peace (UNOP) conducted two workshops in Baguio City, Philippines in 2023. The workshops were held in partnership with the Dominican Environment Committee of the Dominican Family for Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in the Philippines. A total of 27 teachers and 13 members of the Environment Committee benefitted from the first workshop, which focused on topics such as climate change awareness, a rights-based approach to climate change, applicable legislation in the Philippines, as well as the notion of deep ecology.

The second workshop aimed at collaboratively crafting a handbook highlighting the crucial intersection of climate change and human rights. This handbook will seek to empower teachers in Filipino schools to effectively integrate climate change and human rights topics into their curricula. Building upon the modules created during UNOP's 2022-2023 online training sessions, this handbook will strive to serve as a powerful and practical tool for educators, enabling them to deliver engaging lessons that will help students to understand and address these pressing issues.



“ This Handbook [...] will inspire and empower [students] to be future advocates and champions of environmental justice and human rights.”
Sr. Arlene Nacionales OP

ADDRESSING THE ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN HAITI

In light of the critical and expanding challenges faced by the Haitian population, UNOP sent a letter to the States at the Human Rights Council, expressing deep concern about the escalating unrest in the country. The letter emphasised the urgency of addressing the dire situation, as reported by Dominicans living in Haiti, and underscored the need to take a firm stance against the ineffectiveness of Haiti's government in ensuring its citizens' safety.



ENGAGEMENT WITH FISHING COMMUNITIES IN ZAMBALES, PHILIPPINES

UNOP visited Zambales Ecological Network Inc., a local environmental NGO, as well as fishing communities to get a deeper understanding of their fight to protect the coasts and river beds from sand exploitation, including black sand, in the Province of Zambales. During this visit, the team met with local women's groups, particularly wives of fishermen, who have been opposing these destructive operations since 2018. This visit shed light on the mismanagement of sand resources and how it significantly affects marine ecosystems, as well as the livelihoods, health, and housing of coastal communities. With this firsthand experience, UNOP committed to continuing its advocacy at the United Nations in support of these local communities.



GLOBAL COALITION FOR THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT WINS UN'S HIGHEST HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

In 2020, Dominicans for Justice and Peace joined the global coalition advocating for the recognition of the right to a healthy environment. By 2023, the coalition's efforts bore fruit as it was honored with the prestigious UN Human Rights Award. This serves as both an acknowledgment and a motivation, urging governments, businesses, institutions, and individuals worldwide to actively contribute to the effective realisation of the right to a healthy environment for all.





PARTICIPATION AT CCPCJ IN VIENNA

Fr Aniedi Okure, OP participated at the Thematic Discussions of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the reconvened sessions of the CND and of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

During the reconvened session of the CCPCJ, he delivered a statement highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches in combating organised crime, especially around decarbonisation efforts. Marking the first time that he visited Vienna, he took this opportunity to consult with a large number of local partners including the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.



UNOP GATHERING IN NAIROBI

UNOP gathered in Nairobi with the dedicated Advocacy Team responsible for representing the Dominican Family at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). As a notable highlight, the Advocacy Team played an integral role in the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting on October 5, where significant attention was given to the ongoing negotiations on the Treaty on Plastic Pollution. Fr. Aniedi delivered an oral statement underscoring the vital role of UNEP in addressing the global challenge of plastic pollution. His words emphasised the urgency of addressing this critical issue, underlining the significance of the UNEP discussions in this context.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE COP28

As a member of the Interfaith Liaison Committee (ILC), Dominicans for Justice and Peace co-sponsored and co-organised the Talanoa Dialogue on 30 November. More than 150 faith-based representatives participated both online and in person as a prelude to the COP28. The Interfaith Talanoa Dialogue served as a catalyst, strengthening faith-based partnerships and coordinating advocacy efforts at COP28. The event highlighted the great unity that exists between different faiths and spiritual traditions in caring for our Planet.



OUR IMPACTS

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

Joint advocacy efforts **increased awareness** among the global community about the deterioration of the rule of law and the importance of guaranteeing the independence of justice in **Guatemala**

“

Networking was key to our success in the fight against black sand mining, especially with Dominicans for Justice and Peace, who provided us with invaluable support when it seemed like we were alone. Our local cause has gained international attention through UNOP’s advocacy efforts at the UN.

”

Haide Fernandez, Director of Zambales Ecological Network Inc.



Brought to the attention of the international community the pressing issues of climate-induced displacement and **amplified the voices of affected communities** at the international level.



Greater visibility of logging impacts

on human rights in Solomon Islands at the international level through the publication of a joint advocacy report.

INCREASED
CONSCIOUSNESS

OF

30

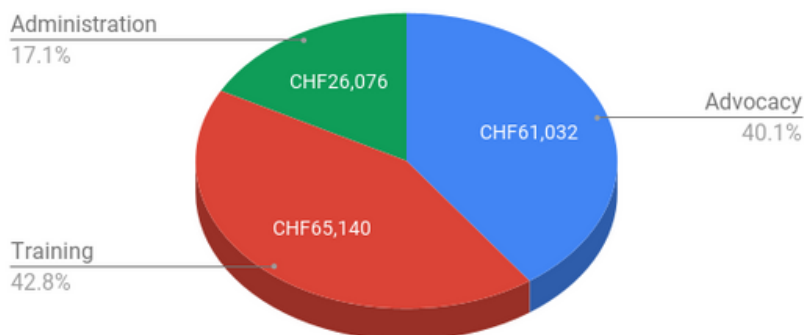
TEACHERS AND
SCHOOL HEADS
ON THE IMPACTS OF
CLIMATE CHANGE
&
ON HUMAN RIGHTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023

	2022	2023
INCOME		
Fundings	149,977.50	146,966.25
Donations	14,593.49	15,624.60
Other incomes	-1,829.26	-3,729.94
Total INCOME	162,741.73	158,860.91
EXPENSES		
PROGRAMMES		
Advocacy	61,919.48	61,032.35
Training	60,633.23	65,140.02
Academic engagement	7,786.77	0.00
Total PROGRAMMES	130,339.47	126,172.37
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	50,472.00	26,075.78
TOTAL EXPENSES	180,811.47	152,248.15
Net Income	-18,069.74	6,612.76

Expenses 2023



OUR BOARD & TEAM



Fr. Aniedi Okure, OP
Director



Laurence Blattmer
Programme
Coordinator



Benedict Rimando
Project Manager



Isis Alves
Interim Programme
Coordinator



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Brita Jelen
Fundraising Intern
(USA)

Thank you!

To our donors and volunteers!

We are grateful for the support of our donors and volunteers who made our advocacy and trainings possible in 2023 through their financial and in-kind contributions.

As a non-profit organisation, we depend on the generosity of external help to make possible certain activities for the benefit of our partner countries.

We thank you for your support!

Donors in 2023:

- Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
- Miseen Cara
- UST Simbahayan Development Office /Dominican Family in the Philippines

To our Board Members!

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to each member of the Board for their unwavering support, guidance, and inspiration. Thanks for believing in us! Their dedication empowers the Delegation to progress confidently towards fulfilling its mission with optimism and confidence!



It is thanks to your **generosity** that we have been able to carry out our activities and projects in 2023. Thank you for your support!

To make an online **donation** visit our website at <https://un.op.org/donate-3/>

@UNOP_Dominicans



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