

A Global Solidarity Network

Published on: 22 January 2020



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the world is coordinated and lives in union of mission and objectives through the International General Council (CGI), the highest instance of the Society at an international level. Since its founding, in 1839 (180 years ago), the General Council is located in Paris (France).

The General Council is “the link between the member countries of the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Its mission is to support the work of Conferences around the world, promoting the transmission of knowledge, the training of leaders, promoting twinning that allows establishing bonds of solidarity and financial support from rich countries to poor countries.

With the International Commission for Aid and Development, it provides emergency aid in situations of humanitarian crisis and finances rehabilitation projects (after a natural disaster, for example), as well as development actions. Its role is also to control the use of funds allocated to the financing of these projects throughout the world.”[1]

Thus, thanks to the solidarity of the National Conferences and Councils throughout the world, the International General Council can maintain its structure and headquarters, as well as develop projects, support the most needy Conferences and assist the Vincentian Councils of countries that suffer natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc.), collaborating in the reconstruction of houses and the donation of medicines and provisions.

Many have been the care work carried out by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in places that have suffered natural disasters; in recent years, countries such as Turkey, Mexico, the Indian Ocean area, Sudan, Haiti, Chile, Peru, etc., have benefited from this aid. Such initiatives were only possible thanks to the resources that are sent to the CGI. Through this solidarity we fulfill Ozanam's dream of bringing the whole world together in a great network of charity.

Due to the noble and meritorious nature of these contributions, we ask that the members be generous and that the Conference Presidents reinforce the objective by encouraging the collection that could be made for this purpose and stimulating the charity of its members.

Being generous in the contributions to the International General Council, each member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will also be contributing to the General President and his Vice Presidents to make the necessary trips to visit the National Councils and expand the presence of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul around the world, among many other specific needs of the CGI (maintenance of the site, promotion of events, printing of publications, etc.).

The international Vincentian community will only be involved, in fact, in this recollection if it knows the projects, structure and initiatives of the General Council, unfortunately still quite unknown by most of our members. It is the task of the presidents of the Particular Council, to be closer to the Conferences, the task of not only explaining but also stimulating contributions so that our network continues to carry out its important, generous and supportive work.

[1] Cf. Website of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, <http://ssvpglobal.org>

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