

New leaders: Catholic Sisters model leadership for change
UISG launches advocacy campaign #NewLeaders to highlight leadership of women religious on global development challenges

Rome, 22nd June 2022 – The International Union of Superiors General ([UISG](#)) has launched a **campaign to highlight the commitment of Catholic Sisters to tackling global development challenges**, and their emerging role as leaders and advocates with extensive experience in grassroots engagement.

Representing over 600,000 Sisters, the worldwide network of UISG member-congregations is estimated to be one of the largest providers of direct community support in areas including health, hunger relief and care for children. Catholic Sisters are on the frontlines of some of the toughest development challenges, and have provided a lifeline to people on the margins throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over centuries of supporting the world's most marginalised and vulnerable, Sisters have consolidated an outstanding model of community engagement based on three pillars – presence, encounter and service. Now, UISG wants to channel this grassroots expertise to inform decision-makers at every level, focusing on the unique experience of Sisters who live among those most affected by poverty, exploitation and climate change. UISG's newest initiative, Sisters Advocating Globally, aims to strengthen the impact of women religious, ensuring their voices and the voices of those on the margins are heeded in the post-COVID development dialogue.

New Leaders is launched today with the release of its first video, ***Leadership for change***. In the wake of the World Economic Forum at Davos – attended by representatives from UISG and partners from the Global Solidarity Fund ([GSF](#)) – and ahead of the G7 summit opening on June 26th, this video aims to start a conversation on the role of Catholic Sisters as leaders.

The video's message is summed up by its closing statement: ***Embracing vulnerability through service as leaders, empowering people and communities to create meaningful change***. As Sisters grow their ministry in leadership for change, they ask fundamental questions that concern the global development community at every level. How can we transform the notion of leadership so that it centres the most vulnerable – and not the strongest – at the heart of our work? And what vulnerabilities of our own must we embrace, on this journey of transformation?

UISG's Executive Secretary, **Sister Patricia Murray**, says: *“Somehow, within the exercise of leadership today, I feel called to help create a global sisterhood where, as Sisters from many different congregations, from different cultures and contexts, we can respond together to the geographic and existential peripheries of our world. There is a hunger and thirst in people for meaning and purpose, for peace and reconciliation, for community and mutual respect. This calls me, as a leader, to nurture those small mustard seeds where new life is emerging – such as empathy and openness to the other, mutual respect and enrichment, encountering and welcoming the stranger, understanding and celebrating difference. When we join together across the multiplicity of divisions that exist in our various parts of the world and nurture these capacities, life begins to flourish, especially in places of great need.”*

Sister Jane Wakahiu, Associate Vice President of Program Operations at the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, says: *“A new leader must be grounded in faith, prayer, self-awareness, and humility; steadfastly embody shared leadership and a vision; listen with tenderness and openness; and walk alongside those they are leading, in solidarity. The leader should possess the capacity to dialogue and reflect before taking action, while promoting the dignity of each person. New leaders should remain positive, energized and hopeful in difficult times, and serve as a guide walking alongside their members, offering a compassionate presence.”*

To watch **New Leaders: Leadership for change**, please click [here](#).

To download the **press pack**, click [here](#).

To contact the **UISG communications office**:

comunicazione@uisg.org

0039 349 9358744

To learn more about **Sisters Advocating Globally**:

advocacy.comms.coordinator@uisg.org

0034 633 119362