



Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Joint Statement
with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious
on the U.S. Policy in Haiti
January 14, 1994

**LCWR Executive Committee Signs NGO Statement
Challenging Administration to Shape a Clearer Policy on Haiti**

Alarmed by the growing humanitarian crisis in Haiti, the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has joined with other non-governmental organizations (NGO) in an urgent appeal to the Clinton Administration to shape a new, less ambiguous policy on Haiti. The statement, signed by more than 20 NGOs, points to the urgency of developing a better-defined policy, noting that the cost of the current conflicted policy has been borne by the poor of Haiti.

The statement urged President Clinton to lead a "new era in U.S. policy towards Haiti that is characterized by unwavering and unambiguous support for the return of the constitutional government and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in a timely manner, and with the constitutional authority to carry out the platform for which President Aristide was elected by the vast majority of the Haitian people."

Weak U.S. policy is harming those least able to help themselves. An emboldened Haitian military regime has interpreted U.S. ambivalence as giving implicit support for the regime's systematic reign of terror and intimidation. Moreover, without full international support, the embargo will continue to be ineffective, penalizing the poor and vulnerable. As currently structured, the embargo places little or no pressure on the military regime to step down, but the incidence of malnutrition and starvation among the poor continues to rise at an alarming rate.

With conditions deteriorating daily for Haitians, the NGO community calls upon the Clinton Administration to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to "immediately halt the prohibition and forced repatriation of Haitian refugees and support the provision of safe haven outside of Haiti for refugees."

The 922 members of LCWR represent the leadership of more than 370 religious institutes in the United States. These women religious are leaders of approximately 90 percent of the 88,000 U.S. Roman Catholic women religious.