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ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA AWARDED NGO STATUS FROM UNITED NATIONS' ECOSOC

Chicago, Illinois – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority established its position as a global influence with the announcement by the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that it had granted AKA Special consultative status. This status is granted to Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that have a special competence and are concerned specifically with certain fields of activity covered by the ECOSOC.

In earning this status, Alpha Kappa Alpha joins an impressive roster of global organizations whose record of achievement has earned this high honor, including AKA partners CARE International and The National Council of Negro Women. It also joins other prestigious NGO organizations like Africare, Amnesty International, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Global Fund for Women, Habitat for Humanity, Human Rights Watch, The Links, Inc., National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. and the National Bar Association.

This powerful designation enables Alpha Kappa Alpha to promote the aims and objectives of the U.N. and to further the understanding of its work to AKA members and communities they serve. This status also means Alpha Kappa Alpha can now actively engage and consult with the ECOSOC, its commissions and subsidiary bodies. The status also allows Alpha Kappa Alpha to access ECOSOC's provisional agenda, attend public meetings, make oral presentations, submit written statements for circulation by the U.N. Secretary-General, participate in preparatory meetings and attend international conferences relevant to its expertise.

Achieving this consultative status gives AKA the leverage to insure that the United Nations' human rights mission gains another voice.

Conferring this designation on Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority represents the successful culmination of a campaign by a team of members—led by International President Barbara A. McKinzie, with AKA member and international consultant Alice M. Dear, as the key facilitator. AKA was able to plead its case through a presentation of its programs and activities relevant to U.N. work, and win back its designation, which had lapsed some time ago.

Alpha Kappa Alpha's president put the significance of this designation in perspective: “Alpha Kappa Alpha has added another achievement to its international portfolio. It also moves our brand squarely into the global humanitarian arena.”

McKinzie appointed Ambassador Dear as AKA's NGO representative. As Alpha Kappa Alpha's representative, Ambassador Dear will head a five-member team that will focus especially on gender equality and advancement of women worldwide. They will also strengthen international cooperation for social development, with particular attention on the core issues of poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration. Ambassador Dear will also continue the Sorority's support of its member, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in her mission to rebuild the economy and strengthen governing institutions in the war-torn country. As a board member of Africare, of which AKA president McKinzie is also a member, Dear and her team will reinforce Africare's resolve to address needs in health, agriculture and water resource development. Alpha Kappa Alpha will also add voice in the ECOSOC to the message of its programmatic partner CARE, as it addresses the global poverty crisis that is burdening many countries worldwide.

Ambassador Dear has a long and impressive history in the international human rights arena. An Africanist, banker and businesswoman, Ambassador Dear's strong international ties are paralleled by her extensive experience as a business consultant and investment advisor. Appointed by former President Clinton to serve as Ambassador/U.S. Executive Director to the African Development Bank (1994-2000), she is now CEO of A.M. Dear & Associates, an advisory boutique that promotes private sector investment in Africa and strategies to support small and medium size enterprises.

Dear played a critical role in assuring that Alpha Kappa Alpha gained the consultative status through her influence, passion and conviction that AKA's powerful network of committed members could effect worldwide change.

Serving in this key role continues Alpha Kappa Alpha's long and storied relationship that is rooted in its commitment to human rights. It is a dedication that was inspired by one of its founders, Norma Boyd, whose activism laid the foundation for AKA's participation in the earliest activities of the United Nations. In 1938, Boyd led the Sorority in creating the National Non-Partisan Lobby for Economic and Democratic Rights, charged with building awareness of the broader social needs of all minority groups and helping these groups participate fully in employment, education and public services. Later renamed the AKA National Non-Partisan Council on Public Affairs (NPC), it was the first full-time congressional lobby for minority group civil rights.

Through the NPC, in October 1946, Alpha Kappa Alpha became the first sorority to obtain observer status at the UN Economic and Social Council. Boyd represented the Sorority as Observer to the Council.

Alpha Kappa Alpha helped craft the highly-heralded Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was consummated in 1948 and became the document around which the mission was defined. The Declaration was inspired by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who so admired AKA's vigorous advocacy and passion for speaking out against human rights violations that she accepted honorary membership into the Sorority.

Since 1948, Alpha Kappa Alpha has leveraged its collective power to help correct the human rights indignities. International President McKinzie and three other AKA delegates journeyed to Paris, in September 2008, to attend the Conference commemorating the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is America's first Greek-letter organization founded in 1908 by, and for, African-American college women. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, it is one of the world's leading service organizations. The Sorority's members have made a commitment "to serve all mankind" through a nucleus of more than 225,000 women in over 975 chapters in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan and in the continent of Africa. Barbara A. McKinzie is the 27th International President McKinzie's administration is marked by the theme: ESP, which stands for Economics, Service and Partnerships. For more information, log on to www.aka1908.com.

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