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# BOLLETTINO

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## INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SU "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION"

INTERVENTO DELL'OSSERVATORE PERMANENTE DELLA SANTA SEDE ALL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SU "*SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION*"

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, S.E. Mons. Renato Raffaele Martino, ha pronunciato ieri alla Seconda Commissione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. su "*Sustainable Development and International Economic Cooperation*":

### ● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. R. RAFFAELE MARTINO

Mr. Chairman:

"At the beginning of a new century, the one issue which most challenges our human and Christian conscience is the poverty of countless millions of men and women". (*Pope John Paul II, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2000*). In repeating these words of the Pope, my Delegation would like first of all to call attention to three points within the discussion of international economic cooperation. Poverty and its eradication are, today more than ever a pre-eminent issue; the concern for this issue occupies the attention of the international community and of the Holy See; and finally, as this issue challenges the human conscience, it has a clear moral connotation.

In fact, the most important problem in the fight against poverty in the era of globalization, is the one of the growing inequalities both between and within states. This concept of inequality is a technical obstacle to poverty eradication and should shake the conscience of and relationship between every human being. According to the latest UNDP Human Development Report, "Inequality can exacerbate the effects of market and policy failure on growth and thus on progress against poverty".

A fundamental ethical principle of the social teaching of the Holy See is the principle of the universal purpose of created goods. A clear expression of this principle has been proposed by Pope Paul VI, in his Encyclical Letter on the "Development of Peoples": "God destined the earth with all that it contains for the use of all men and nations, in such a way that created things in fair share should accrue to all men under the leadership of justice

with charity as a companion (*Gaudium et Spes*; 69). All other rights, whatever they are, including property rights and the right of free trade must be subordinated to this norm; they must not hinder it, but must rather expedite its application. It must be considered a serious and urgent social obligation to refer these rights to their original purpose." (*Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, 1967*).

International economic cooperation should be based on the principle of the universal destination of material goods which can offer a starting point of a conceptual way to look for means to eradicate poverty. A successful way of achieving the poverty reduction goal is to promote a more pro-poor growth.

More pro-poor growth needs more pro-poor national policies which assure sustainable social and economic development. A basic one is a policy that attacks rural poverty, since most of the world's poor still live in a rural area. In this regard, it is necessary to stress once again the importance of implementing agrarian reforms that are effective, equitable and productive. In fact, "in many situations radical and urgent changes are needed in order to restore to agriculture-and to the rural people- their just value as the basis for a healthy economy, within the social community's development as a whole". (*Pope John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, 1981*). But, agrarian reform cannot be confined simply to redistribution of ownership of land, it must be intended as an instrument capable of extending private ownership of land, even if common property, a feature of the social structure of many indigenous populations, must be taken into consideration.

An effective pro-poor policy which intends to fight rural poverty should also take into account other aspects. It should promote the development of family-sized farms, farms that are large enough to allow the family sufficient earning, to retain possession of the farm, to have access to the land credit market, and to ensure sustainability of the rural environment also through appropriate use of inputs. Moreover, public authorities should ensure that the rights of rural workers are protected, promoting conditions that ensure the right to work, guaranteeing the right to just remuneration for work and the right to form associations. Finally, education systems capable of bringing about the rural people's effective cultural and professional growth should be established. The more farmers know about the productive capacities of the land and other inputs, and the various ways of satisfying basic consumer needs, and the more fruitful their work will be. Priority must therefore be given to setting up a system capable of providing the broadest possible range of knowledge, and the promotion of technical and scientific skills at various educational levels (*Towards a Better Distribution of Land, The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 1997*).

At the international level, more should be done to attack rural poverty, especially in the field of international trade.

The negotiations on agriculture should bring about a renewed commitment to substantially reduce the obstacles to market access-tariffs, domestic support and export subsidies-for agricultural and processed goods from developing countries.

International cooperation must be enhanced, along with the contribution of the private sector in order to allow developing countries to intensify the process of diversification, create infrastructures and apply technologies that increase agricultural productivity in a sustainable way.

A system of intellectual property rights that balances the need to provide incentives for innovation with the need of poor countries to share in the benefits of these innovations is also essential. Care should be taken that farmers from poor countries do not have to pay disproportionate production costs that undermine their livelihood and agricultural activity.

The sustainable management of biological resources ought to be promoted, by recognizing local community rights, the protection of methods being applied by farmers to enhance biodiversity and improve plant varieties and the sharing of benefits deriving from this work.

The right to food security and to healthy and quality nutrition should always be put before commercial targets; there should also be substantial financial support for other types of agricultural research, such as an organic

agricultural system already being applied with success in various local communities. (*Trade, Development and the Fight against Poverty, The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 1999*).

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, my Delegation would like to reiterate the call made by Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See, during the Millennium Summit: "The present situation calls for a moral and financial mobilization, directed to precise objectives and with a view of obtaining a drastic reduction of poverty...Commitments undertaken at the international conferences and meetings devoted to promote development should be respected".

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