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LE UDIENZE

Giovanni Paolo II ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza, nel Palazzo Apostolico di Castel Gandolfo:

S.E. Mons. Giovanni Angelo Becciu, Arcivescovo tit. di Roselle, Nunzio Apostolico in Angola e in São Tomé e Príncipe;

S.E. Mons. Peter Paul Prabhu, Arcivescovo tit. di Tituli di Numidia, Nunzio Apostolico;

Ecc.mi Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale del Brasile (Oeste 1 e 2), in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

S.E. Mons. Bruno Pedron, S.D.B., Vescovo di Jardim;

S.E. Mons. Protógenes José Luft, S.C., Vescovo di Barra do Garças;

S.E. Mons. Milton Antônio dos Santos, S.D.B., Vescovo di Corumbá;

S.E. Mons. Redovino Rizzardo, C.S., Vescovo di Dourados.

[01437-01.02]

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 46ª SESSIONE DELLA CONFERENZA GENERALE DELL'AGENZIA INTERNAZIONALE DELL'ENERGIA ATOMICA (VIENNA, 16-20 SETTEMBRE 2002)

Si chiude oggi a Vienna la 46ª sessione della Conferenza Generale dell'Agencia Internazionale dell'Energia Atomica (A.I.E.A.).

Riportiamo qui di seguito l'intervento pronunciato il 17 settembre u.s. dal Rev.mo Monsignor Leo Boccardi, Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso le Organizzazioni Internazionali a Vienna:

● INTERVENTO DI MONS. LEO BOCCARDI

Mr. President,

It is a great honour for me to congratulate you, on behalf of the Delegation of the Holy See, on your election as President of the forty-sixth General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I am convinced that under your able guidance the work of this Conference will be successfully brought to conclusion. My Delegation would like at the same time to express its gratitude to the Director General Mohamed ElBaradei and to the Secretariat for their dedicated service, and to welcome the Delegations of the State of Eritrea, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Seychelles as new Members.

Mr. President, distinguished Delegates,

The Delegation of the Holy See has always followed with great interest the initiatives, efforts and projects undertaken by the Agency that are aimed at the improvement of the safety in the use of nuclear energy and technology. We would like to underline especially the importance of the scientific research work, seminars and symposia on the radiological protection of patients, the monitoring and reduction of occupational exposure to radiation (cf. Symposium held in Geneva in August 2002) and on the safe management of radioactive waste. The Agency – through its programs and expertise – plays an eminent role in this field and makes a valuable contribution towards creating a global nuclear safety culture.

In order to achieve these objectives, an up-to-date system of training and education has to be established and applied coherently. Much has been done in recent years. But looking at the issue on a world-wide scale, one cannot overlook that there are still possibilities for improvement in regard to the implementation of appropriate safety standards and especially to the education of those who are applying nuclear techniques and penetrating radiation. It is surely very important to replace old technical equipments with modern ones that provide a higher level of safety, but it seems even more vital for a nuclear safety culture to increase the awareness of potential dangers which go with nuclear technologies. At the same time we have to follow attentively the situation in this regard in all Member States in order to prevent or eliminate, if there are some cases of it, double standards of protection and quality assurance for industrialized countries on the one hand, and developing ones on the other hand.

The radiological protection of patients and caregivers has been for my Delegation a question of great importance. We are not getting tired in repeating that it is the human person who is at the center of all scientific research and development. But this fundamental principle does not exclude the problem of environment protection and the question of the impact of nuclear technologies, notably ionizing radiation, on it.

In this connection, we would like to greet the ongoing discussion, initiated by some Member States of the Agency, carried on by the Agency itself and a group of consultants, on ethical considerations in protecting the environment from the effects of ionizing radiation. We become more and more aware that preserving our earth,

its bio-diversity, is an indispensable part of our efforts to make a more human world for future generations. The generally strict regulations applied for the use and handling of radioactive and fissile material and waste should be fully enforced in order to protect the human family and the environment from potentially harmful radioactive isotopes and ionizing radiation.

One of the greatest concerns pertaining to the safety and security of nuclear material on an international scale, is the increasing problem of orphan radioactive sources. In this area the IAEA is fulfilling an indispensable task not only in assisting Member States in creating and strengthening national regulatory infrastructures to ensure that these radioactive sources are appropriately regulated and adequately secured at all times (a "cradle-to-grave" control of radioactive sources) but in aiding those institutions and States which have recently asked for assistance in emergency situations.

Mr. President,

In regard to the technical cooperation activities, we would like to commend the Agency for its significant contributions in many Member States. The assistance granted in the fields of medicine, particularly for cancer treatment, diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine, helps numerous people in those regions where the modern forms of diagnosis and medical treatment are on a large scale not yet available and where especially the rural population has scarcely any access to it.

The Agency's efforts, in collaboration with other UN organizations, in the area of agriculture, in the fight against diseases and animal pests, in nutritional safety and in isotope applications for exploring water resources and addressing pollution problems in some large cities, have brought positive results and certainly should be continued. Tailored to the real needs of those who request them, they continue to contribute considerably to social and economic development in many parts of the world.

Technical cooperation activities, however, are by no means a one-way-road. Recent experiences with successful projects show that – in order to be fruitful in the long run – the participants of such activities are called upon to adapt these projects to their own regions, to develop them further and to hand on their knowledge to their colleagues in neighbouring countries where similar problems occur. Thus, this kind of technical cooperation across the borders is able to address fundamental issues with a deep impact on the social, economic and humanitarian situation of many societies.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude by wishing the Agency much success in implementing its noble role in our world by putting the nuclear technology at the service of sustainable development, peace and well-being of the entire human family.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[01438-02.01] [Original text: English]

**INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA CONFERENZA MINISTERIALE EUROPEA
SULL'INVECCHIAMENTO (BERLINO, 11-13 SETTEMBRE 2002)**

Dall'11 al 13 settembre corrente, si è tenuta a Berlino, sotto l'auspicio della Commissione Economica per Europa dell'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, una Conferenza Ministeriale sull'Invecchiamento.

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che il Capo della Delegazione Pontificia, S.E. Mons. Diarmuid Martin,

Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite ed Istituzioni Specializzate a Ginevra, ha pronunciato giovedì 12 settembre:

● **INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. DIARMUID MARTIN**

Too often, today, longevity and ageing are classified as problems. Longevity is rather is a gift of God, to be enjoyed and utilized fruitfully. In most parts of our world, longevity can be said to be a characteristic of our times. Older people have therefore the right to be able to realize fully the capacities and the talents they possess and to take their rightful place within society.

On their part, society and the institutions of society – including the private sector – must assume a more coherent role in ensuring that an adequate framework exists within which people, as they grow older, receive the support they need to remain active protagonists. We have not yet taken fully into consideration the broad significance of the demographic changes which will arise from increased longevity in Europe.

The programme of action proposed by this Conference stresses the need to foster a more positive image of older people. We must recognise our societies as multi-generational societies, to which older people belong not just on the margins. Social recognition should not be linked solely to economic productivity. The inalienable dignity of each older person does not depend on his or her apparent utility.

Changes in family patterns in many European countries have led to a greater isolation of older people. The drop in birth rates is in part due to an individualist trend in current social philosophy, as a result of which decisions concerning the number and spacing of children take less into account the responsibility of families towards the future of society. A similar individualist understanding of the human person can reduce the capacity of the family to carry out its role in intergenerational solidarity.

It is difficult to establish the correct balance between a stress on the individual's right to personal fulfilment and the obligation of solidarity. Solidarity however always brings with it a price. Social policy must be structured in such a way that intergenerational solidarity – a fundamental value of human society – is not rendered impossible because too costly. In a situation in which multi-tiered private/public alliances will be needed to sustain pension funds, it is important that the sufficient safeguards be introduced to guarantee fundamental rights and needs of the elderly in the face of market fluctuation.

Older people will of course have special needs concerning housing and a living environment adaptable to their various conditions. Care and assistance should be available to people where they wish to live, if possible close to the environment in which they have spent most of their lives and close especially to their family.

The fact of widespread and growing longevity will demand not just structural changes in our societies but also in the choices of persons. Many problems which the elderly face are in fact the product of incorrect life-style choices earlier in life, concerning unbalanced diet and nutrition, lack of exercise and lack of recourse to simple preventive health measures.

In ensuring that older people are facilitated in remaining autonomous and active for the longest possible period, greater stress should be placed on educational structures, such as Universities for elderly people, as well as neighbourhood groups and other associations, which provide intellectual stimulus and address also the particular spiritual needs of older people.

A truly multi-generational society is one in which older people feel that they fully belong, in which their dignity will always be fully protected, in which they need not fear, and in which their contribution will be respected and their wisdom appreciated.

