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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA 92° SESSIONE DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE DEL LAVORO

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Si è svolta a Ginevra nei giorni 1-17 giugno 2004 la 92^a sessione della Conferenza Internazionale del Lavoro, alla quale ha partecipato una Delegazione di Osservazione della Santa Sede, guidata dall'Osservatore permanente presso l'Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite ed Istituzioni Specializzate a Ginevra, S.E. Mons. Silvano Maria Tomasi, C.S.

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento pronunciato da S.E. Mons. Silvano Maria Tomasi, Capo Delegazione, nella mattinata dell'8 giugno:

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. SILVANO M. TOMASI

Mr. President,

1. The task of building a society which respects the human person and its work gives priority to the human ordering of social relationships over technical progress, necessary as the latter is. Such concern runs through the preparation documents of this 92nd International Labour Conference, especially the Report of the Director General who carefully highlights achievements and shortcomings as well as the strategic areas of future involvement demanded by the changing conditions of the world's economy.

2. In his call for a rediscovery of the meaning and value of work, Pope John Paul II has extended an invitation "to address the economic and social imbalances in the world of work by re-establishing the right hierarchy of values, giving priority to the dignity of working men and women and to their freedom, responsibility and participation... (and) to redress situations of injustice by safeguarding each people's culture and different models of development."¹

3. Looking at the future, the projection that by the year 2015 there will be 3 billion people under the age of 25 makes the challenge of employment creation an issue already for now. The search for full employment is not only a legitimate preoccupation but an ethical commitment involving owners and management, financial

institutions, the organization of trade, and workers. A joint effort has been the approach and the trademark of the ILO through its social dialogue of governments, employers and workers representatives, a model that pioneered a method of society-building that has a fruitful proven track. The resulting economic system has a better chance to preserve the priority of work over capital and of the common good over private interest.

4. Jobs creation is the main road to personal and national development. The human person becomes the best capital with his/her creativity, knowledge, relationships, spirituality. Working persons enrich society and foster ways of peace. Besides, the promotion of jobs in the poorer countries is also in the interest of the richer ones. If we take the case, for example, of agriculture, the readjustment and elimination of subsidies in developed countries will allow the employment of thousands, the growth of trade, the improvement of the national economy, in countries where agriculture is still the predominant way of life . As a consequence, the quality of life of everyone will benefit and forced displacement and international migration will no longer be an unavoidable necessity for survival. Besides, as noted in the Director-General's Report, conflicts disrupt the achievements of set goals of development . But at the root of many conflicts is the lack of work and of a minimum earning capacity to escape poverty and live in dignity with one's family.

5. The interconnectedness of economic variables and actors on the global scene has been underlined in the important conclusions of The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The Commission supports the ILO's strategic objectives and these, in turn, serve as a base for decent work. In this way, securing employment, with social protection, with adequate standards and rights at work, in a constructive tripartite social dialogue opened to other and new forces of civil society, recognizes that work is an expression of each person's dignity and identity and that it goes far beyond any quantitative measurable economic value.

6. It seems appropriate to emphasize that by preserving the priority of the person, globalization too becomes fair as it avoids leaving behind vulnerable groups, women and children in particular, migrant workers, seafarers and others categories of workers, and less developed populations. An important step in this direction has been the rapid entering into force of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. Allow me, Mr. President, to refer again to the social doctrine of the Church as presented by Pope John Paul II: "A society depends on the basic relations that people cultivate with one another in ever widening circles – from the family to other intermediary social groups, to civil society as a whole and to the national community. States in turn have no choice but to enter into relations with one another. The present reality of global interdependence makes it easier to appreciate the common destiny of the entire human family, and makes all thoughtful people increasingly appreciate the virtue of solidarity."²

7. Work that allows people to live a decent lifestyle requires today a concerted commitment to provide workers with sufficient education and training so they may have the skills needed to confront successfully the information revolution and the increasingly knowledge-based economy. Initiatives in this sense will protect them from poverty and social exclusion. Enhancing human capacity applies also to developing countries if they have to play their rightful role in world trade with the production of quality products. As Pope John Paul II has noted: "It is not just a question of giving one's surplus to those in need, but of 'helping entire peoples presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development. For this to happen...it requires above all a change of lifestyles, of models of production and consumption, and of the established structures of power which today govern societies."³

In conclusion, Mr. President, the just participation of all, individuals and states, in the building up of the future must lead to their fair share in the benefits resulting from decent work for all in the human family.

¹ John Paul II, *Homily for the Jubilee of Workers*, 1 May 2000.² John Paul II, *Message for World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2001, n. 173 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 58[01018-02.01] [Original text: English][B0306-XX.01]