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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL *JOINT DEBATE* DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SU *REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY* (ITEM 52) AND *STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM* (ITEM 54)

Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, il Nunzio Apostolico S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha pronunciato lunedì 4 ottobre scorso all'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. nel corso del Joint Debate su "Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly" (item 52) and "Strengthening of the United Nations system" (item 54):

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mister President,

The Holy See looks at the process of strengthening the United Nations with hope, great interest and willingness to submit its contribution. It is a complex but much needed endeavor, which involves three different objects: structures, means, and ends.

During these last months, both public opinion and member States have rightly focused on the structure of the bodies of the United Nations. Implicit in such a discussion there was always a question about how the Organization's structure and functioning are adequate to the Charter's goals and on what means we can count to implement them. It is precisely this meaning that we attach to the ongoing discussion on "effective multilateralism": the capacity to fulfill the tasks set out in the Charter, some of which have been highlighted in the MDGs.

Characterized by its universal membership, this Organization must be adapted to equally universal goals. We know from experience that the shape of political life and the influence exercised by public authority are not always up to the task of promoting the common good. Today the universal common good is confronted with problems of world-wide dimensions; problems, therefore, which can be solved only by an authority possessed with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems and whose sphere of activity is world-wide. Thus, the bodies of the international community should be shaped so that they are capable of realizing the common good by ways and means adequate to the changing historical conditions.

Till now, the debate has laid emphasis on a wealth of reasons, motivations and valuable reflections about the institutional engineering of the United Nations. In this respect, perhaps the main point we wish to restate is that structures must reflect functions. As for the reform of the bodies, my delegation would like to suggest some terms of reference.

First of all, we should keep in mind that the United Nations is a community of States that shares fundamental values, well outlined in the Millennium Declaration: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Strengthening the United Nations system implies the acknowledgment that this is a system founded on cooperation rather than on competition among States and actively nourished by constructive will, trust, keeping of commitments and collaboration among equal and reciprocally responsible partners. Making these founding principles irreversible is a primary task.

In the process of reforming and adapting this institution it is important to identify guiding principles, as well as objective, just and fair criteria, acceptable to all member States, that will in turn pave the way towards a constructive reflection on the composition of the different bodies.

The bottom line is the recognition of the principle that all States are by nature equal in dignity. We know very well in this institution that even though nations may differ widely in material progress and military strength, they are all conscious of their juridical equality. It is true, however, that the nations that have attained a superior degree of scientific, cultural and economic development have the responsibility to make a greater contribution to the common cause.

On a more practical note, the essential criteria that should be taken into account for reshaping the structures and revisiting the procedures of this Organization are as follows: for the structures: representation and inclusiveness; for the procedures: impartiality, efficiency and efficacy; for the outcomes: accountability and responsiveness.

The legitimacy of the decisions taken in the United Nations, including the Security Council, ultimately derives, as for any political body, from two pillars: degree and scope of representation, and process of decision-making. Decision-making will therefore tend, in general, towards a greater consensus of opinions in the deliberations.

It is clear that, for practical reasons, not all the bodies of the United Nations can be arranged on the model of the General Assembly. This does not mean however that the set of principles and criteria just mentioned are not applicable to the Security Council, quite the opposite. In restructuring this body, one might consider that its composition should reflect, as far as possible, a representation of the world population, of geo-political regions, of various levels of economic development and of different civilizations. This list may not be complete, but it includes criteria that are essential in order to improve the credibility and efficacy of a reformed Security Council. Finally, it is important to consider the actual capacity and political will to contribute substantially to reach the goals that constitute a priority for the overall majority of the member states.

At the same time, as the Panel on United Nations - Civil Society Relations recommended in its report to the Secretary General, the United Nations needs to become a more outward-looking organization capable of listening more carefully to the needs and demands of the global community.

In this context we are reminded of the recommendation of the same Panel to "connect the global with the local". This criterion can be read as a modern version of the well known notion of subsidiarity, which is another landmark for the process of reform. In fact, most problems in today's world, because of their gravity, breadth and urgency, are often simply too difficult for the rulers of individual States to solve with any degree of success. At the same time, we must make it clear that the United Nations' essential purpose is to create world conditions in which the public authorities of each nation, its citizens and intermediate groups, can carry out their tasks, fulfill their duties and claim their rights with greater security.

It is our hope that some of these ideas may help to ensure that the reform of this institution will not only help to realize our common goals, but that it will invest the United Nations with the necessary authority, in terms of credibility and moral legitimacy, to act for the good of the global community. That is surely the primary reason for the United Nations' existence.

Thank you, Mister President.

[01245-02.02] [Original text: English]

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL SECONDO COMITATO DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SU *SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT* (ITEM 88)

Nella giornata di ieri, 5 ottobre, nel corso della 59ª Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U., l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, ha preso la parola dinanzi al II Comitato sul tema "Sustainable Development" (item 88). Di seguito riportiamo il testo dell'intervento del Nunzio Apostolico:

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

With the Johannesburg Summit behind us, we cannot allow ourselves to forget that sustainable development is an important and vital theme of UN deliberations.

If the WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) is the point of departure for the redefinition of an international cooperation which involves us all as stakeholders, we would do well to recall that "human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." For this reason we believe that sustainable development must always be considered within the context of an authentic human ecology.

Mr. Chairman,

In his *Report on the Work of the Organization*, the Secretary-General discussed the linkages between the various aspects of sustainable development. It appears evident that there is a web of interconnectedness in all that goes to create sustainable development.

We all know the different kinds of linkages underlined last March in Jeju, during the UNEP eighth special session and in New York last April within the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), something that will be further developed at the next session of the same Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2005.

When we take into account issues such as the protection and use of water resources, the provision of sanitation, the improvement of human settlements and public health, the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs, we are faced with a complexity of interconnections and synergies that need to be regularly re-examined. The Holy See gives its support to this process in view of the 2005 session of the UNCSD and its preparatory meeting next February.

In the same way, the Holy See is pleased to lend support to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction which will be held next January in Kobe, with the aim of promoting the integration of disaster reduction activities into programmes directed at fighting poverty, protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to proceed more quickly towards sustainable development, useful steps forward will be made by means of the broadest participation of stakeholders. Through their active involvement, the essential principles of solidarity and subsidiarity will be respected. It is through these two principles that stakeholders will come to perceive that the needs of all, not just some, must always be taken into account. In this context, what is important is to guarantee an appropriate accountability on the part of those directing programmes and projects on sustainable development, so that decisions taken will reflect the concerns of the people that the programmes meant to help.

In this sense, it would be most helpful if persons living on or beyond the margins of society were actually considered as true actors in their own development. People are not tools but central participants in the determination of their future. In their specific economic and political circumstances, they should be left to exercise the creativity that is characteristic of the human person and upon which the wealth of nations depends. Sustainable development should thus be aimed at inclusion, something that will only be attained through equitable international cooperation, participation, and partnership.

The marginalized, while stakeholders, are often deprived of their voice at the negotiating table. Only the bond of solidarity can guarantee a real change in this regard. Genuine global prosperity and progress on issues of sustainable development depend on the unification of the interests of all people. The Holy See takes this opportunity to appeal for an integrated strategy that will reinforce the kind of solidarity in which all, not just some, people can exercise joint stewardship.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning finally to the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", the Holy See joins all those who recognize the essential place of water in development that is human-centred and truly sustainable.

My delegation recognizes that water is not only an essential part of life and development, but that everyone has a right to water that is clean, safe and adequate for enhancing life. Although it is not a specific issue within the topic at hand, in treating sustainable development, the Holy See believes that access to water is a basic human good and an essential instrument for bringing about development that is truly human-centred and sustainable.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01246-02.02] [Original text: English]

INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL TERZO COMITATO DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELLE NAZIONI UNITE SU SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (ITEM 94a)

Pubblichiamo di seguito il testo dell'intervento pronunciato ieri, 5 ottobre, dall'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede presso l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite, S.E. Mons. Celestino Migliore, davanti al III Comitato della 59ª Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul tema "Social Development including Questions relating to the World Social Situation and to Youth, Ageing, Disabled Persons and the Family" (item 94a):

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Mr. Chairman,

In the United Nations, we often hear about development in general but perhaps more should be made of social development specifically. Once we reflect on the objectives of this noble organization, we come to realize that human beings are at the center of all that we do. Their social development is in line with and has a vital role in establishing peace and security.

In the course of time, some forces of globalization have aggravated the insecurities associated with poverty and vulnerability. The youth, the ageing, disabled persons, indigenous peoples, migrants, women and the family have all been sidelined to varying degrees and have become more prone to poverty. Economic progress does not suffice in itself, but should be accompanied by socio-political progress which will assure that a part of the general benefits have a social purpose. In this sense, policy frameworks and developmental plans, both national and international, should create an enabling environment which in turn will lead to social integration, access to basic social services, education and primary health care, sustenance of the family, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, so that all become owners of their own development.

We are reminded of the drive to implement social development by some important declarations issued in the UN during the past decade.

My Delegation is gratified to find them throughout the documents from Copenhagen to Johannesburg, because we believe in development focused on the human person and in development which realizes human capacity. Such a vision involves moving from assistentialism to empowerment. It means moving away from a policy in which people or groups are considered the object of intervention, to one in which they become the protagonists of their own development. Making them the center of concern should also include the recognition of their capabilities and potentials.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to focus on some particular issues concerning social development:

The social policies for the protection of vulnerable individuals will make sense and will be effective in so far as they are capable of strengthening natural social groups – the small communities and the family – as well as in the measure that they generate a sense of responsibility in civil society towards vulnerable sectors. One must also recognize the social nature of children, the elderly and the handicapped. Only the creation and empowerment of a diversified social network, which begins with the family and is seen at different levels throughout society, will empower those as yet unprotected.

The Holy See once again calls attention to the protection of the family. My delegation is firmly convinced that:

"Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family." In this context, my delegation robustly participated in the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family which it viewed as a most significant occasion to continue the discussions that will help strengthen the role of the family in today's world.

The Holy See is actively engaged in the current work to draft a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, and looks forward to the drafting of a Convention that will further protect the rights of those concerned. What is at stake is nothing less than the right of those individuals to be full members of society. The work on this Convention must become the vehicle by which we take into account the authentic interests and concerns of disabled persons. In a society rich in scientific and technical knowledge it is now possible to do more in the various ways required by civil coexistence: from biomedical research for preventing disabilities, to treatment, assistance, rehabilitation and a new social integration. This convention is being drafted in favor of the disabled, so that they may fully participate in the right to life, something which must be guaranteed to all.

I can assure delegates that the Holy See will continue to work for a better future for all, through recognition of that human dignity which we all share.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[01247-02.02] [Original text: English]

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