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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE AL SECONDO COMITATO DELLA 61a ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'O.N.U. SULLO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE

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Pubblichiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo Mons. Celestino Migliore, Nunzio Apostolico, ha pronunciato ieri davanti al Secondo Comitato della 61a Assemblea Generale dell'O.N.U. sul punto 53 (a) e (d): *Sustainable development: (a) "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development"; (d) "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind"*.

● INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam Chair,

If we wish to make sustainable development a rooted, long-term reality, we must create a truly sustainable economy.

Even in the context of its fast transition and mutation, our economy continues to rest basically upon its relation to nature. Its indispensable substratum is soil, water and climate; and it is becoming rapidly ever clearer that if these, the world's life support systems, are spoiled or destroyed irreparably, there will be no viable economy for any of us. Therefore, rather than being external or marginal to the economy, environmental concerns have to be understood by policy makers as the basis upon which all economic – and even human - activity rests.

This is why the fulfillment of commitments to the 1992 Earth Summit's economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development are the very minimum response required, here and now, by states and all relevant environmental actors. The environmental consequences of our economic activity are now among the world's highest priorities.

The environmental question is not only an important ethical and scientific problem, but a political and economic problem too, as well as a bone of contention in the globalization process in general. It means not just integrating sustainable development into programmes for poverty reduction and development, but also reflecting the

preoccupations and environmental problems in security strategies, and in developmental and humanitarian questions at the national, regional and international levels. In a word, the world needs an ecological conversion so as to examine critically current models of thought, as well as those of production and consumption.

My delegation therefore welcomes the progress mentioned on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programmes for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in the Secretary-General's report now before the Committee. Greater emphasis on renewable energy, fuels and clean technologies and the mainstreaming of national sustainable development strategies into policy-making appears to be gaining momentum, although all actors, starting with states, must do much more to stop and reverse current trends in consumption and pollution.

Both the G8 summits in 2005 and 2006 devoted much attention to energy for sustainable development and to climate change as well as to industrial development and atmospheric pollution. These phenomena have an obvious environmental impact, with wide repercussions on national and international security, as well as on the capacity of the international community to achieve the MDGs. The international community should continue to deepen its understanding of the links between peace and human development, above all in the poorest sectors which have less capacity to adapt.

As for the implementation of the various UN environmental conventions, my delegation also welcomes the momentum gained since the Marrakesh Accords were adopted, thus making the Kyoto Protocol fully operational. It is the Holy See's hope that opportunities like these may favour the application of an energy strategy which is both global and shared in the long term, capable of satisfying short and long term global energy needs, protect human health and the environment, and establish precise commitments that will effectively confront the problem of climate change.

In the meantime, if fossil fuels are going to be with us for "the foreseeable future" and if states are going to rely on "hybrid options in energy mix", as the Secretary-General suggests, then serious public investment in clean technology must accompany this pragmatism as an urgent part of national and international strategies to diminish as fast as possible the impact of air and sea transport pollution and those sectors' continued use of outdated technology. Progress is slowly being made in clean technologies in other fields, including even that of car transport: but the time is now ripe for major investment in cleaner air and sea transport technologies before the ecological balance is tipped by culpable neglect.

Regarding water, the second UN World Water Development Report stated that the principal problem which impedes the fulfillment of water requirements is not the lack of sufficient water for human needs but that of the governance of water resources highlighting problems of management, infrastructure, technology, and finances. Governance of water resources must be based on the implementation of the principle of responsibility shared at the international level, with particular attention to the principle of subsidiarity, which requires the participation of local communities in the decision-making process.

On a related subject, the UN designated 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, undoubtedly one of the most alarming processes of environmental degradation, with a strong negative impact not only on the environment but also in economic and social fields. Desertification and drought now affect more than one in six of the world's population. The international community must take concrete actions to reverse this alarming phenomenon through internationally coordinated responses.

Finally, the rural sector, upon which three quarters of the world's hungry people depend, is being ever more degraded. Findings at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development at Porto Alegre earlier this year rightly underlined the importance of the role of agrarian reform and rural development in combating hunger and poverty, in promoting sustainable development and food safety, in guaranteeing the promotion of human rights, and in achieving the MDGs. Policy makers cannot continue to treat the rural world as second class.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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