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INTERVENTO DELLA SANTA SEDE ALLA PLENARIA DELL'ASSEMBLEA GENERALE DELL'ONU SULLA CULTURA DELLA PACE

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Riportiamo di seguito l'intervento che l'Osservatore Permanente della Santa Sede, l'Arcivescovo Celestino Migliore, Nunzio Apostolico, ha pronunciato ieri a New York davanti alla Plenaria della 61a Sessione dell'Assemblea Generale della Nazioni Unite sul punto 44: "La cultura della pace":

• INTERVENTO DI S.E. MONS. CELESTINO MIGLIORE

Madam President,

The maintenance, defence and promotion of peace in the world are at the summit of the functions and priorities of the United Nations. Through conviction and many years' experience, this Organization believes that peace is first and foremost a culture prior to its being a network of peaceful relations among nations, anchored in the system of rules and mechanisms of international law.

All through the years of the UN's activity, the Holy See has expressed confidence in this Institution as a privileged forum where nations can work in concert for the promotion of peace, and has offered its own contribution in reading the signs of the times, deepening reflection, and above all in rallying entire communities in the world to foster and maintain a culture of peace.

At the start of this year, Pope Benedict XVI addressed all women and men of goodwill with a message entitled "In Truth, Peace"¹. Reading the signs of our time in which terrorism, nihilism and fanatical fundamentalism threaten peaceful coexistence, the Pope underlined the inseparable bond between peace and truth.

Peace implies a truth which is common to all peoples beyond cultural, philosophical and religious diversities. It is the idea of the dignity of every human person intimately linked to the transcendent. Thus peace will be reached once it is understood and put into practice as the realization of this shared truth, in mutual respect of cultural diversities. "An extreme exaltation of differences clashes with this fundamental truth. We need to regain an awareness that we share a common destiny which is ultimately transcendent, so as to maximize our historical

and cultural differences, not in opposition to, but in cooperation with, people belonging to other cultures" (n.6). To this end, we need to affirm the common commitment to promoting institutions and methods of joint action and cooperation between peoples and nations, and especially to fostering education for peace, at a level well above the necessary and hoped for structural reforms.

In this context, my delegation would like to renew its support for the ongoing International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. We all have a great responsibility for the formation of future generations. That is why the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue will convene a meeting in Assisi tomorrow for young people from different countries and cultural and religious backgrounds, engaging them in a personal commitment to dialogue, prayer and education on tolerance and peace.

The lack of the basic truth of peace at the cultural level has undoubtedly produced devastating effects down through the years and there are still cultures and mentalities that even today deny it exists. The most dramatic example is international terrorism. The criminal designs of international terrorism rest on false cultural roots which deny the existence of a link between truth and human life. Such roots are identifiable in nihilism and in fanatical fundamentalism, which are erroneous ways of relating to truth. "The nihilist denies the very existence of truth, while the fundamentalist claims to be able to impose it by force. Despite their different origins and cultural backgrounds, both show a dangerous contempt for human beings and human life, and ultimately for God himself" (n.10).

The causes of the lack of peace in our world cannot be reduced to those of an exclusively social or political nature. Terrorism, wars, genocides and national and international injustices which discriminate, oppress and abandon to hunger and helplessness entire populations, hinder or threaten the right to existence of nations, can also be explained by deeper motivations of a cultural, ideological, philosophical and even religious nature. Social behaviour and political choices usually follow. At this level, it is essential to formulate both national and international peace policies, which will embrace the truth of peace and shun lies as a system for relations or governance.

With the 2005 Summit Outcome document, this Organization adopted the principle of the responsibility to protect as a practical translation of the exercise of sovereignty and of governance. The responsibility to protect presupposes the capacity and the will to remove threats, to establish relations and mechanisms apt to continue to dissuade humanity from resolving their disputes through the use of force and, to the extent possible, to substitute force with law.

The responsibility to protect is intimately linked and directly proportional to the respect for the truth of peace, whether it is a question of deciding to use force in extreme cases, the conduct during and after conflict, military expenditure, the arms trade, disarmament and nuclear proliferation, demographics or the approach to development.

To realize peace at the social and political level, the correct relation between truth and peace at the cultural level needs to be re-established.

Thank you, Madam President.

1 In http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20051213_xxxix-world-day-peace_en.html[01560-02.01] [Original text: English][B0550-XX.01]
